

‘Art is the New Steel’: Marketing Creative Urbanism in Twenty-First
Century Hamilton, Ontario

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Abstract

As a major manufacturing hub in southern Ontario, Hamilton enjoyed considerable economic stability during the twentieth century. However, like most industrial-based cities, Hamilton's role as a North American manufacturing producer has faded since the 1970's. This has resulted in dramatic socio-economic impacts, most of which are centered on the inner city. There have been many attempts to revive the core. This includes Hamilton's most recent urban renewal plans, based upon the principles of Richard Florida's creative city hypothesis and Ontario's *Places to Grow Act* (2005). Common throughout all of Hamilton's urban renewal initiatives has been the role of the local press. In this thesis I conduct a discourse analysis of media based knowledge production. I show that the local press reproduces creative city discourses as local truths to substantiate and validate a revanchist political agenda. By choosing to celebrate the creative class culture, the local press fails to question its repercussions.

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Chapter 1: Introductions and Summary

1.0 Introduction

The “astonishing rise and reproduction” of urban neoliberalism, a mode of city governance and driver of urban change, has been well documented over the last quarter century (Hackworth 2002, 2). In the mid-sized Canadian city of Hamilton, Ontario, the production and reproduction of urban neoliberalism has been occurring for well over a decade. Informed by the province of Ontario’s ‘Places to Grow’ urban strategy, and the growing popularity of Richard Florida’s work (2002), the city of Hamilton has remained resolute in realizing its creative city potential. At the municipal level, a series of urban planning documents (*Putting People First: The New Land Use Plan for Downtown Hamilton* (March 2004), *Love your City Cultural Policy and Plan* (October 2013), *City of Hamilton Economic Development 2010-2015* (2010), and *Gore Park Master Plan*, September 2009) have been drafted in adherence to Florida’s work and the ‘Places to Grow’ provincial document, displaying a strong emphasis on intensive cultural and economic development.

As victims of globalized ‘roll-back’ and ‘roll-in’ neoliberalism (Peck & Tickell, 2002), places like Hamilton have compliantly ‘rolled-with’ neoliberalism to modernize the city and shed its industrial legacy (Keil 2009; Kratke 2011). By ‘downloading’ the guiding principles of Ontario’s provincial growth strategy and remaining true to the values outlined in Florida’s creative class literature, city managers hope to attract a diverse population of new knowledge economy workers and lucrative investments by international capital (Wood, 1998; Keil, 2009; Peck & Tickell, 2002). The hegemony of

neoliberal discourse, as influential protagonist in shaping contemporary urban revitalization practices, has received considerable academic analysis and should not be undermined, as demonstrated in Chapter Four (Brenner & Theodore, 2005; Harvey, 2005; Hackworth, 2007; Keil, 2009; Kratke, 2011; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Swyngedouw 2000). However, rather than an analysis of discursive reproduction as it exists in local planning policies and practices, this thesis is dedicated to the analysis of these discourses as they exist in local newspapers and affiliated media sources. To do this, this discourse analysis is guided by two specific research questions:

- How have neoliberal discourses impacted Hamilton's built environment?
- and
- What are the local truths that produce and reproduce neoliberal hegemony within Hamilton?

In particular, I am interested in how the sources mentioned above provide a specific knowledge and interpretation of the city's urban landscape: before, during and after, the assumed creative city renaissance¹. For the sake of simplicity, the discursive frames (Shortell 2011) will be defined in this thesis as: 'Creating the Problem', 'Finding a Solution' and 'Pressing Forward'. Each chapter provides an analysis of the local truths considered imperative to Hamilton's creative city development. Broadly, these discourses are: urban danger, soluble authenticity, and successful economic development.

In order to reveal these localized discourses as they exist in the press, I have identified key themes and arguments, distinguished variations of truths across texts, and paid particular attention to 'silences' not represented in the dominant discourse (v.

¹ Paul Berton, "Downtown Hamilton has bright future," *Hamilton Spectator*, August 07, 2012.

Tonkiss 2012). By disentangling place-branding campaigns, slogans and citywide marketing efforts (v. Kratke 2011, 5) intertwined within these local truths, I hope to reveal the discursive presence of urban neoliberalism in Hamilton.

My analysis is presented over five chapters. The first empirical chapter (Ch.4) traces the discursive expansion of neoliberal hegemony through a historical lens. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the rise of neoliberalism within the Canadian context, how it has informed national and provincial policies, and lastly, its impact on Hamilton. Key themes in this chapter are: the rise of the neoliberal bloc, Ontario's "Places to Grow" provincial mandate and Hamilton's impulse to ratify creative city planning measures. The following chapter (Ch.5) begins the discursive analysis of local truths, as they exist in Hamilton's dominant newspaper. Specifically, this chapter investigates how local media depicts downtown Hamilton as place of disrepute and danger. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Six, the prevailing truth that depicts downtown Hamilton as an edgy/dangerous space not only justified the 'creative city' solution, but also accommodated it.

In order to shift negative perceptions of the core, a series of newspaper articles celebrate Hamilton's urban grit, authenticity and heritage as desirable qualities of place and space. Reimagining the core as an authentically vibrant locale allows for the third and final phase of creative city truth production. In Chapter Seven, Hamilton's new reality, at least according to the dominant discourse in the press, is that the city has finally, and successfully, transitioned from a deindustrialized manufacturing center to innovate creative city.² Key themes in this chapter include economic development, vibrant downtown and innovation center. Chapter Eight, the final portion of analysis in

² Keanin Loomis, "Arts and culture now drive Hamilton," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 23, 2015, sec. Opinion and Commentary

this thesis, turns away from the dominant discourse in order to highlight the silent truths not recognized in the press. As the downtown undertakes this process of creative city revitalization, urban spaces are altered as sites of socio-economic exclusion, hallmarked by activities and performativity synonymous with the new middle class the prevailing feature of a 'New Hamilton'.

Discourses of Interest:

- Discourses of Neoliberal Hegemony and Urbanism (Ch.4)
- Discourses of Urban Danger, Filth, Vagrancy (Ch.5)
- Discourses of Creative City; Authenticity; Organic Revitalization (Ch.6)
- Discourses of Urban Safety and Economic Development (Ch.7)
- Discourses of Silence

1.1 Field of Study: Hamilton, Ontario

Located on the shores of Lake Ontario, 61.6 kilometres south of Toronto, Hamilton has long been associated with heavy manufacturing. Once the preeminent producer of steel in the region, a vast majority of Hamilton's local population was employed by one of its two major steel mills (Freeman 2001). By the eighties, like most mid-sized industrial cities, Hamilton had succumbed to the globalization of steel production. Over the course of twenty years, Hamilton's strong tax base moved away from the city centre, resulting in an extended period of urban neglect and glaring socio-economic disparities between the inner city and surrounding suburban communities.

Migration from Hamilton's inner city had begun as early as the nineteen seventies, as global demand for Canadian steel slowed. Furthermore the ratification of *laissez faire* policies such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, encouraged

manufacturers to relocate outside the urban periphery, and in some cases, outside the country. Politicians and urban managers struggled to fill the economic void by encouraging low-wage service labour into the city, but to no avail. Hamilton's economy did not recover. As services and industry continued to relocate, Hamilton's inner city underwent an extended period of urban decay. By the mid-nineties, public perception, locally and abroad, associated Hamilton's inner city with an overall lack of safety. Despite a few short-sighted urban beautification projects (Central Area Plan, Downtown Action Plan, Barton Street Artist Colony), Hamilton's downtown remained largely ignored until the conceptual theory of creative city development became popularized.

The seemingly universal acceptance of the creative city growth strategy encouraged capital to reinvest in the 'frozen' (Smith, 1979) spaces of a downtown landscape by capitalizing on the local potential of heritage, history and culture, aspects purportedly sought after by the creative class, or knowledge economy workers. In the case of Hamilton, because of its proximity to Toronto, urban managers have been committed to renewing the urban landscape by creating an environment attuned to Richard Florida's creative city index (Florida, 2002). As a result, trendy coffee shops, restaurants, entertainment venues and condominium projects are increasingly populating Hamilton's urban landscape. This process of municipally guided gentrification falls in line with neoliberal urbanism as identified in the variety of public planning policies that were ratified shortly after the release of Richard Florida's 2002, *Rise of the Creative Class*. The execution of these planning documents is the relationship between official directives and the local media, specifically the *Hamilton Spectator* and *CBC Hamilton*. The goals of urban managers, as outlined in these documents above, are described in the

media as signs of urban renewal, or perhaps more poetically an urban renaissance³. More importantly, by reimagining the landscape of Hamilton's inner city as one that is vibrant and cool, local media, and especially newspapers, inherit the role of localized mechanisms of discourse enticing a population of suburbanites to the created sanitized spaces and urban spectacles in Hamilton's downtown.

1.2 Summary

In summary, the purpose of this thesis is to clarify and critique the popular creative city script propagated in Hamilton and surrounding areas. I shall demonstrate how the success of contemporary city revitalization hinges upon the ability of the City to market and reimagine urban spaces initially as dangerous and then to craft a depiction of them as discursive 'cool' and lastly, as economically vibrant. By maintaining this narrative, urban managers, city boosters and local elite can benefit from the creative city shift while simultaneously absolving themselves from bearing any responsibility from the socio-economic repercussions of an authentically-organic gentrification process. By attributing these socio-economic discrepancies as the natural outcome of trickle-down urban revitalization, these parties alleviate the need to address and connect the actual socio-economic issues at hand. In doing so, the City of Hamilton 'silences' a large contingent of its population, despite the systemic socio-economic disparities that are so evident.

³ Jim Howlett, "Reclaiming our core, one Crawl at a time: Art Crawl is now of downtown Hamilton," *The Hamilton Spectator*, May 30, 2012, sec. Opinion and Editorial A19.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This thesis is in part a response to the unabashed pandering and conformity of local municipalities to Richard Florida's creative city logic. For the most part, Richard Florida's body of work is a recapitulation of earlier theories emphasizing the emergence of a tertiary knowledge economy interconnected by regional and global urban centers. According to Florida, this economic shift will require a large labor pool of highly educated creative workers who prioritize lifestyle opportunities. As a result, Florida suggests managers of declining cities must invest in an urban landscape capable of attracting and entertaining this economically regenerative demographic. Despite the popularity of Florida's urban hypothesis, there have been numerous critiques that undermine the formulaic nature of his theory. The strongest critique, and of most interest to this research, is the suggestion that Richard Florida's work subtly emphasizes socio-economic disparities through geographical exclusion. Stefan Kratke's 2011, *The Creative Capital of Cities*, outlines how Florida's ideas of urban redevelopment work within a neoliberal social order that favors the elites through "gentrification projects and real-estate development for the *socially selective* enhancement of a city's attractiveness (Kratke 2011, 40). Under the guise of urban revitalization and/or renewal, contemporary urban planning practices, or 'in-here' neoliberalization, have come to represent the varied manifestation of 'out-there neoliberalism' on the street level.

Over the last quarter century, an extensive body of literature has been devoted to uncovering and understanding the diverse and plural processes of neoliberalism's *modus operandi* and its relationship to the modern city. This chapter borrows dominant strands of neoliberal theory in an attempt to provide a comprehensive understanding of those

neoliberal variants that impact the urban landscape and local struggles currently unfolding between ‘power and powerlessness’ (Brown 2000, 692).

2.1. Out-There Neoliberalism

The general neoliberal interpretation, as it relates to the global dissemination of discourse and policy, can be attributed to a small influential group of thinkers and right-wing think tanks. Those associated with institutions such as, the famed Chicago School and Mt. Pelerin Society were resolute in retracting the social policies that had come to define Western society after the Second World War (Harvey 20005). Over the course of fifty years, through a series of socio-economic experiments, expansive public campaigning and political lobbying, neoliberalism evolved into “the exclusive guarantor of freedom” and the “proper mode of governance for a variety of geo-institutional contexts” (Harvey 2005, 40; Hackworth 2007, 9). By the end of the eighties, the ideas and policies of neoliberalism had been firmly integrated into the political, social and economic discourses of Western society were portrayed globally as the prevailing economic model for free-market capitalism. For those on the right, this signified the triumph of individualism and signaled what some argued as the ‘end of history’ (Fukuyama, 1992). At the dawn of the twenty-first century the idea of the social safety net or Keynesian economics were significantly undermined by neoliberal discourse.

In 2002, Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell had confirmed that neoliberalism was no longer a “dream of Chicago economists” or a “lefty conspiracy theory”, but in fact, the “common sense of the time”, a malleable and intrusive “phenomenon whose effects are necessarily variegated and uneven” (Peck & Tickell 2002, 381). The confirmation of neoliberalism ‘out-there’ also led to a greater effort in compartmentalizing its variegated

effects. Prior to the turn of the century, neoliberalism was predominantly scrutinized and interpreted as an all encompassing ‘end game’. This theoretical approach, though useful for understanding the process ‘out-there’, faltered when applied at the street level in places around the world. To overcome this theoretical obstacle, broad neoliberalism would need to be separated from the contemporary actualizations of ‘deep neoliberalism’ (Peck & Tickell 2002, 384). The multi-scalar existence of neoliberalism forces an alteration of its ideological integrity as it moves downscale and becomes compromised by the realities of a nation, region, city and street. In order to adapt to circumstance, neoliberal discourse and policy, which exists ‘out-there’, must evolve into a fluid doctrine that willingly and unforgivingly abandons any of its theoretical preconceptions in order to adapt in time, space and place. As a result, ‘out-there’ neoliberalism willing becomes refashioned as ‘in-here neoliberalization’ or ‘actually existing neoliberalism,’ in an effort to restructure society and individual practices around a self-regulating market immune to government regulations and intervention⁴ by creating exchange between the global and the local.

2.2. In-here Neoliberalization

Reimagining in-here neoliberal processes as specific place-oriented causalities of the larger discourse has required a laborious academic endeavor capable of mapping out “contextually specific geographies of actually existing neoliberalism imagined, constructed and resisted in North American cities” (Brenner & Theodore 2005, 102). Fundamentally, by mutating in congruence with the social, cultural and political constructs of specific places, ‘in-here’ neoliberalization, or ‘actually existing

⁴ Dictionary of Human Geography, 5th ed. Rev., s.v. “neoliberalism.”

neoliberalism’ is able to maintain the ideological precepts of ‘glocalization’ (Swyngedouw 2000b; Brenner, Peck & Theodore 2010). By tracing, analyzing and interpreting the diverse mutations of ‘in-here’ neoliberalization, it becomes possible to garner a deeper understanding of the effects the greater discourse has in place and space.

Despite the inevitability of fragmentation, a categorical inventory of ‘actually-existing’ neoliberalism can provide a bottom-up approach of critical analysis that can lead to a greater, fundamental understanding of how neoliberalism embeds itself in contemporary society and ways to resist it. The thorough analysis of ‘on-the-ground’ neoliberal processes also alleviates the convoluted burden of negotiating the diverse and meandering scalar mechanizations of neoliberalism, permitting an incisive understanding of the social, political, discursive and representational struggles unfolding along the gradual process of a “neoliberalized urban order” (Brenner & Theodore 2005, 102). In the last decade, neoliberal ideological impressions have become glaringly evident in the physical landscapes of the developed urban center. The manifestation of neoliberal ideals have turned the actual landscape of the inner city into prime sites for critical analysis and investigation of bottom-up, ‘in-here’ neoliberalization (Hackworth 2007). The remainder of this chapter explores the existing literature dedicated to the understanding of ‘actually existing’ neoliberal urban restructuring and its affects on the modern city.

2.3. Circulation Capital and Inter-Urban Competition

The current free-market economic system requires nations, regions and cities participate in the globalized marketplace. This varies by scale, but the basic need to attract and maintain potential investment from global capital is considered integral to economic sustainability in the twenty-first century. Since the early eighties, major cities

had already begun to integrate a series of over-arching policies that would create an economically viable environment that benefited from the emerging knowledge economy, urban beautification, real-estate speculation and increased safety. However, in the last decade, these same processes and policies have ‘trickled-down’ to influence and inform the future constitution of second and third tier cities in the developed world.

Determined by ‘market economy logic’, contemporary planning practices suggest inner city spaces must be revitalized in order to encourage global, regional and local reinvestment for the economically depressed downtowns. David Harvey suggests this type of city redevelopment is actually a form of urban entrepreneurship funded by the investments of public-private partnerships determined to spur profitable economic development. Within the context of the creative city discourse, fixed gentrification, high-end services and downtown surveillance take precedence over solutions addressing the socio-economic issues at the root of inner city degradation (Harvey 1989, 8). In order to attract such investment, cities must compete regionally and nationally to create and project a revised image of the city that is complicit with the new knowledge economy. Peck and Tickell explain participation in such ‘interurban competition’ essentially

turns cities into accomplices in their own subordination, a process driven – and legitimated – by tales of municipal turnaround and urban renaissance, by little victories and fleeting accomplishments, and ultimately also by the apparent paucity of ‘realistic’ local alternatives. Thus, elite partnerships, mega-events, and corporate seduction become, in effect, both the only games in town *and* the basis of urban subjugation. The public subsidy of zero-sum competition at the inter-urban scales rest on the economic fallacy that every city can win, shored up by the political reality that no city can afford non-involvement in the game (Peck & Tickell 2002, 393)

In the case of second and third tier cities, like Hamilton, their entire economic future has been invested in the creative city solution. The general consensus amongst political leaders and local elites assumes any failure or unwillingness to comply with

the neoliberal creative economy will negate urban growth and/or individual profit. Molotch and Logan, explain that in the pursuit of growth and jobs, “communities do not judge a product in terms of its social worth, nor a machine in terms of its human value...instead, they invite capital to make anything – whether bombs or buttons, tampons or tanks” (Molotch & Logan 1984, 484). In the case of contemporary twenty-first century society, communities have been convinced to embrace the creative economy as the *only solution* to their economic conditions. As a result, local elites, municipal economic teams, city boosters and urban managers have obsessed over the nurturing and sustaining what Logan and Molotch (Logan & Molotch 1987) describe as a ‘Growth Machine’.

2.4. The Growth Machine

The elitist approach to urban redevelopment is slightly variegated across different cities, regions and continents. However, despite subtle changes in time, space and place, the emphasis and outcome are consistent. Any obstructions to capital gains, whether permanent or unfixed, are muffled, coerced and eliminated from a prospective site by the more powerful, influential and resourceful elitist view (Logan & Molotch 1983). Through an assemblage of resources constituting that constitute “the urban growth machine”, the pursuit of capital can be achieved. Since 1987, according to J. Allen Whitt (Whitt 1987), art had already become an integral part of urban growth strategies through an increased funding by government and private institutions. Described as ‘arts-centered’ strategies, traditional members of an urban growth machine are reoriented to act as supporting components to arts organizations and historic preservationists (Whitt 1987, 16). For businessmen,

politicians and developers, art is a means to encourage more tourism, conventions and tax revenues. In a sense, art is deconstructed and reinterpreted in the growth machine as a capital-generating tool and basic cultural attribute that can make “an area more renewable.” However, art is not irreplaceable, as one developer explains: “[I]f cement factories did that, we would be putting them in” (Clack 1983, 12).

To realize the profit potential of art-based strategies synonymous with creative city development, a variety of cultural-service amenities such as bourgeois café culture, nighttime entertainment districts, urban street festivals, niche retail outlets and condominium projects are pursued and encouraged (see also, Peck 2005). According to Whitt, art is a weapon used by cities to gain a competitive advantage over other cities and their own suburbs. Advocates also argue that the arts-centric strategy “pumps money into the local economy through wages for artists and administrative personnel, purchases of theatrical and artistic supplies and services, in addition to what is spent on attendance at cultural events, arts audiences spend money in restaurants, taxicabs and shops (Whitt 1987, 23). In most cases, a “relatively affluent white collar and professional class” that contributes to, and is supported by, the art-centric strategy constitutes the art audiences. Almost three decades before Florida re-popularized the creative class idea, it was believed that the young, urban middle class demographic would choose downtown over the suburbs in order to be closer to cultural opportunities and the anticipated managerial, cultural, research communication and educational employment centers.

Attention to creative city revitalization and the ‘live-work-play’ mantra ensure uneven development across the urban landscape. This creates ‘terrains of struggle’

across the city landscape between the local ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’:

[T]he city is the locus of conflict between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic powers and discourses, between the relations of power, domination, subjection, exploitation and resistance. This is both a material and an inter-discursive struggle that is reflected in the appropriation, domination and production of space. As the outcome of such struggles, the built environment represents a site of contestation between differing beliefs, values and goals, between powers to dominate and resist that are spatially and socially contextualized. Within this terrain of struggle, the local state is at once an object and agent of regulation, which itself requires regulation so that its powers and structures can be used to forge a new social, political and economic settlement (Leibovitz & Salmon 1999, 234)

In other words, in order to ensure the elite status quo, the state has realigned itself by relinquishing its role as caretaker in favor of disciplinarian. The purpose of the contemporary state is now to ensure a viable economic environment by the removal of any obstructions to the place-based development strategies targeted at accumulating capital and repressing social policies (Leibovitz & Salmon 1999, 234). The systemic nullification of urban public-ness emboldens the privatized governing body, encouraging alterations, both discursive and physical, to the function, roles and practices of people and place. As a result, social interactions are reduced to social “transactions” in a retail-and-entertainment-intense city, a type of urbanization-for-profit organized by local elites to change the social relationship with the city (Logan & Molotch 1987). As a result, creative city policies, municipal by-laws and public developments are always favorable to the interests and needs of the elite class (Leibovitz & Salmon 1999, 234).

The creative city discourse and subsequent production of vibrant space is a reflection of ‘out-there’ neoliberal discourse and ‘in-here’ neoliberalizing space. The remainder of this chapter will describe the beliefs, values and goals of creative hegemony and its manifestation in contemporary urban planning documents. This will further incite

an analysis of contemporary urbanization as a procedural and physical representation of neoliberal reform, exercised and realized at the local street level as a representation of the ‘yuppie’s’ private interest and the rise of a creative class.

2.5. The Creative Class

The ‘creative class’ (Florida 2002) is an emerging labor force equipped with university degrees and the potential for developing innovative and profitable solutions (Dul, Ceylan and Jaspers 2011, 716). Influenced by his predecessors (Anderson 1976), Florida describes this broad range of young creative professionals as the proverbial saviors of deindustrialized and decaying downtown core. Florida’s work argues the mere presence of creative class groups will help to attract and transform any ailing municipality. Furthermore, he believe cities capable of cataloging and expanding upon ‘creative city characteristics’ will be able to attract and retain the affluent youthful demographic that craves art and music scenes, expensive cappuccinos and a wide range of social and recreational activities associated with a ‘creative’ lifestyle and community (Florida 2002, 232). Based upon the parameters established by Florida, the constitution of a ‘creative’ varies from the bohemian avant-garde to the professional medical practitioner, dividing the creative ‘spectrum’ into two basic groups: the *Super Creative Core* and the *Creative Professionals* (Florida 2002, 69).

The first group is composed of highly specialized and diverse individuals: scientists, university professors, poets, novelists, artists, entertainers, designers, cultural figures and think-tank researchers. In the second group, creative laborers range from various high-tech sectors, legal and health care professionals and business managers. In most instances, the basic requirement of the creative knowledge worker is specialized

educational training, knowledge and expertise in the production and monetization of innovative solutions (Florida 2002, 69). The shift towards a tertiary knowledge-economy and the lucrative production of intellectual capital has generated a substantially greater demand for creative labor (Rivette & Kline 2002). The global demand for creative labor has created competition amongst knowledge-driven corporate firms and businesses, encouraging investment in extensive recruitment programs designed to seek out the next ‘creative innovator’.

In order to benefit from this common recruitment practice, Florida suggests cities reimagine the inner city as a viable lifestyle option for the creative class to attract workers, companies and capital. Urban centers that attract and foster an expansive creative labor pool, which in turn, will entice knowledge-based industries to relocate to the city, spurring economic growth through the production and re-production of innovative high technology and patents. City leaders who hope to create a profitable business environment will concern themselves with where and how knowledge workers “Work, Live, Play.”

2.6. The Creative Landscape

In June 2002, the left-leaning news site *Salon.com* declared that twenty-first century cities must embrace creativity or ‘die’ (Dreher 2013). Cities across the developed world, since then, have largely aligned themselves with ‘creative city’ thinking. The inner city is reimagined as a centre of culture and consequently as a conduit for commerce and profit within the knowledge economy (Florida 1995). Culture in the creative city equals post-industrial survival and revenue for cash-starved municipalities.

According to Florida, refashioning the inner city as a vibrant culture and economic centre requires technology, talent and tolerance, otherwise described as *'The 3 T's of Economic Development'*. Theoretically, a city boasting '3Ts' has higher concentrations of diverse creative capital, higher rates of innovations, high-tech business formation, job generation and economic growth (Florida 2002). The three T's symbolize "quality of life," but also create the urban conditions "creatives" seek, including "access to artistic and cultural scenes and diverse social opportunities," so desired by the creative class (Florida, Mellander & Stolarick 2010, 278). These assumptions are based upon a series of customized 'creative city-indices' that measure a municipality's creative attributes and 'cool points'. Some of these creative categories include: the density of creative professionals, number of GBLT couples within an area and the amount of patents that have been developed and registered within the region during a defined period of time (Florida 2002, 255). The paradigms of the 'Creative City Index' have become the principle objectives of municipal policies and planning procedures determined to achieve creative city success.

The universal arrangement of the creative city index implies a 'one-size-fits-all' solution that can be seamlessly integrated to any city or place. As a result, cities must jostle with one another in a standardized competition for national exposure and prospective creatives. Cities must struggle to compete for 'cool points' to garner a higher ranking and greater probability of attracting both creative workers and employers. To manage the citywide creative revitalization, Business Improvement Associations, described below, have become key operatives in developing, fostering and promoting 'trendy' neighborhoods and spaces specifically oriented to the needs and desires of the

lauded creative class population.

2.7. Business Improvement Associations (BIA's)

Popularized in Toronto during the sixties, Business Improvement Associations (BIA) (Canada) and Business Improvement Districts (BID (USA) have evolved into municipal quasi-governmental institutions at the turn of the twenty-first century (Brooks & Strange 2011, 1358). The day-to-day function of BIAs can be expressed differently across space and place. However all variations maintain a basic principle. According to Sharon Zukin, the common goal of every BIA/BID is,

To keep shopping streets, commercial districts, and public parks clean and safe at a time when city government budgets are grasping for funds and city dwellers are repelled and frightened by the litter, odor, panhandling, and other nuisances they find when they step outside their front door. To pay for the program, BID members agree to assess themselves a small percentage of their local property taxes over and above what they owe the city government; the city government collects the self-imposed assessment with the other local taxes and returns it to the BID. Most important, if rarely stated, these associations work to raise property values in and around public spaces, which cannot be done if homeless men and women sleep on park benches, muggers threaten shoppers, walls and lampposts are covered with graffiti, and cities fail to provide the basic services of street cleaning, trash collecting, and policing on which the urban public, including the businesses that rent commercial real estate relies (Zukin 2010, 127-128)

The desire, or perhaps necessity, to create an attractive, safe and clean urban enclave ties in with the expectations of the larger neoliberal creative city discourse. Private investment in safe streets, beautification and aesthetic coincides with the notion that one attractive and bustling downtown locale will strengthen overall city competitiveness through intense 'inter and intra metropolitan competition' (Peyroux, Putz & Glasze 2012, 112). As a result, there has been a quiet transition of public municipal power to private BIA groups: "[t]he BID is a class of government to which the state grants certain powers; it is legally independent of other local governments and typically establishes a governing board to oversee activities (Hoyt 2005, 24). This has resulted in the atomization and

privatization of urban space, creating an urban landscape speckled with rival nodes of privatized neighborhood government, in competing with one another for creative consumers. Integral to the success of these quasi-political entities is the implementation and emphasis on the 'Broken Window Theory'.

Published in 1982 by social scientists James. Q. Wilson and George. L. Kelling, the criminological theory has become the foundational philosophy of contemporary BIA's, setting the precedent for all mandates, practices and regulations.

The broken window theory relies upon four critical assumptions about space and its association with social action: that landscapes emit messages; that community health is necessarily expressed territorially; that social divisions mirror spatial ones; and that the local scale is the most important one for addressing crime." Creating and maintaining a designated area as 'clean and safe' is the primary goal of business improvement areas. In most scenarios, this goal is reached through implementation of security cameras, downtown ambassadors and 'clean teams' (Lippert & Sleiman 2012, 64)

Theoretically, failure to address any 'broken windows' on the ground, will result in unemployment, out-migration, decreased property values, and decline in tourism. Alternatively, emphasis on policing minor infractions in spaces deemed 'troubled', produces vibrant neighborhoods teeming with economic potential (Kramer 2012).

This sanitizing of the public seeks to alleviate urban spaces of any potential threats or dangers. Lippert argues the Broken Windows Theory is really about "the peculiar contours of public corridors of BIDs, with the promise of providing 'clean and safe' passage through declining economies and infrastructure and the effects of dwindling social welfare nets of Canadian city cores" (Lippert 2012, 170). In principle, these spaces are reimagined and repurposed to aesthetically remediate and physically alter underlying socio-economic issues. Furthermore, this form of urban revitalization facilitates and emboldens a localized embourgeoisment consisting of refined social activities, behaviors

and representations that reinforce “symbolic visions of the city and specific ideas of urban life associated with it” (Veblen 1899; Peyroux, Putz & Glasze 2012, 114). In the case of the creative city, this means that public spaces function and demand in accordance to everyday practices and behaviors synonymous with a bourgeois ideal, one synonymous with the ‘semi-publicness’ of the suburban shopping mall.

This ersatz public space facilitates conspicuous consumption by encouraging patrons to move unobstructed through a sanitized and homogenized landscape. The goal of the downtown BIA is the replication of the conditions of the suburban shopping mall by reinforcing city beautiful principles: landscaping, banners, street furniture and lighting, designer pavements, marketing events (street festivals) and enhanced private security as the main facets of design (Lippert & Sleiman 2012, 64). Central to all of this and the chief objective of any city beautiful movement, is the creation of an urban environment that is both safe and secure, a reclamation project described by Neil Smith as “revanchism”:

More than anything the revanchist city expresses a race/class/gender terror felt by middle-and ruling-class whites who are suddenly stuck in place by a ravaged property market, the threat and reality of unemployment, the decimation of social services, and the emergence of minority and immigrant groups, as well as women, as powerful urban actors. It portends a vicious reaction against minorities, the working class, homeless people, the unemployed woman, gays and lesbian immigrants (Smith 1996, 212)

Revanchism, at its most extreme, seeks to maintain the hegemony of a historically white-patriarchal social order (Hubbard 2004). However, as a function and facilitator of neoliberal discourse, contemporary revanchist policies are implemented with much less prejudice. In the modern city, revanchism is repurposed to alleviate the fears of affluent neo-suburban creatives in a quasi-suburban environment.

2.8. Gentrification

In many early accounts, gentrification innocuously begins in a small concentrated community within a loosely defined area. Gradual expansion of the community encourages members to provide services and amenities that meet the daily demands of the neighborhood. Inevitably, this expansion leads to local exposure and an association with terms that describe the place as *vibrant*, *trendy* or *up and coming*. The third wave of gentrification is the co-opting of place by private and government agents seeking to capitalize on the growing consumer demand. Put simply, this is the gradual process in which working class neighborhoods are ‘rehabilitated’ by a more affluent demographic of homebuyers, landlords and developers (Smith 1982, 139). The potential economic dividend made possible through gentrification has encouraged second and third tier cities to emphasize and foster local gentrification processes by targeting ‘new islands’ of development deemed suitable for re-investment (Kratke 2011, 24). Once implemented at street level, gentrification unfolds along specific urban sites and land parcels most readily primed and reflective of creative city development.

This is described as ‘urban creative destruction with a vengeance’, a ‘locational seesaw’ based upon a process of investment, depreciation and reinvestment of the built environment (Lees, Slater & Wyly 2008, 53). This process creates what Smith describes as a ‘rent gap’, one that is

Wide enough that developers can purchase shells cheaply, can pay builders’ costs and profit for rehabilitation, can pay interest on mortgage and construction loans, and can then sell the end product for a sale price that leaves a satisfactory return to the developer. The entire ground rent, or a large portion of it, is now capitalized: the neighborhood has been ‘recycled’ and begins a new cycle of use (Smith 1987, 545)

In the contemporary creative city, it is not uncommon for governments and municipalities

to provide subsidized assistance and financial incentives to developers, new businesses and middle-class residents to invest in the built environment of their locale (Lees, Slater & Wyly 2008, 54). Akin to 'in-here' neoliberalization, gentrification varies in space and place, yet its purpose and goal remains consistent across all geographical plains. The fluid and widely accepted process of gentrification in the developed world creates a homogenous network of places structured economically, socially and physically, to the facilitation and accommodation of capital, information and people (Smith 1979, 545) The latter, and perhaps most stressed in creative city development, is achieved by building an urban landscape that offers an over abundance of condominium and 'loft living options' (Zukin 1989).

Sharon Zukin's seminal work on the condominium surge in the late eighties outlines the two stages of this repetitive loft market. The first stage is triggered by the decline of small industrial businesses and growing number of industrial building vacancies. A decrease in rent makes these spaces attractive to artists whom naturally reimagine the place into a large live/work loft space. Demand for these spaces grows, followed by raising rents, a cycle described by Zukin as a 'minor market' that segues into the second stage. Once the market expands to include the 'haute-bourgeois', many of which possess minimal artistic talent or connection, tenant rentals increase exponentially while also creating an influx and demand for new condominium developments. For the most part, this is the traditional 'first, second, third' phases of gentrification. However, in contemporary creative city revitalization efforts, traditional gentrification stages have been compounded, creating an experiment of modernized manufactured gentrification. This process of 'hyper-gentrification' offers a built environment that is attractive to both,

'dirt & drywall' gentrifiers attracted to old Victorian 'fixer-uppers' (classic gentrification) and 'turn-key' young professionals attracted to condominium lofts that reflect the 'gritty' urban aesthetic in a more tailored and sanitized fashion. Tantamount to the construction of these inner city condominium projects is the expansion of an experiential service economy and event-spectacle that caters to the insatiable consumer demands of the creative class. For the most part, these events primarily unfold in the public spaces of the inner city.

In order to reimagine the typically unpredictable urban landscape as a manicured suburban representation, city leaders rely on private investment – to convert inner-city neighborhoods into generators of the new economy (Catungal, Leslie, Hii 2009, 1095). Despite being recognized as a local process, “third-wave gentrification” (Hackworth 2007), or the hyper-financialization of urban real estate development at the turn of the twenty-first century (explaining the condominium-ization of inner cities, or land rent/rent gap maximizing) is a symptom of neoliberalism ‘out-there’. Regardless of either size or scale, cities in the developed world have proceeded to ‘unfreeze’ defunct properties in order to encourage the flow and circulation of capital. Alterations to the physical landscape occur in a variety of ways, but generally, contemporary gentrification is understood as a reproduction of space articulating and expressing the consumption habits and desires of an affluent public (Lees, Slater, Wyley 2008, 61). As a result, third-wave gentrification wipes away any traditional notions of urbanity, reimagining it only as ordered, aestheticized land-use pivoting on economic efficiency and profit maximization.

2.9. Public Space

In the creative city, public space is reimagined as a site for urban festivals, public

art installations, cultural events and small consumer opportunities providing entertainment and services to a preferred public (Madden 2012, 200). Production of urban spectacles presents, albeit momentarily, altruistic characteristics of the city and its 'people' (Johansson & Kociatkiewicz 2011, 394). As part of this temporal transition, any underlying socio-economic issues are hidden to create "voodoo cities" in which the "facade of cultural redevelopment is a 'carnival mask' hiding continuing disinvestment and increasing social inequality" (Gotham 2002, 225-226). Once temporal spectacles have been deemed 'successful' by city boosters and local media, permanent alterations to public space begins to take hold in the form of designated restaurants, tourist zones, museums, casinos, sports stadia and specialized stores (Zukin 1998, 832). In an effort to appease and stimulate the 'creative' public, these spaces and surrounding areas provide 'consumer experiences' within a themed urban core' (Goheen 1998). Public space in the creative city has been co-opted by the neoliberal expectation; resulting in an apolitical urban landscape constituted by spaces serving as false-representations of publicness. Organizing public space in this manner blatantly favors a more affluent public and contributes to the accumulation and facilitation of capital at street level. A majority of citizens unknowingly assimilate this subversive consumer culture, practicing and abiding the expectations, discourse and policies of neoliberalism, both out-there and in here. Those opposed or unable to comply with the expected monetary participation are gradually marginalized and socially dismissed. Sharon Zukin argues "[t]he disadvantage of creating public space this way is that it owes so much to private-sector elites, both individual and philanthropists and big corporations. This is especially the case for centrally located public spaces, the ones with the most potential for raising property

values and with the greatest claims to be symbolic spaces for the city as a whole” (Zukin 1995, 32). Described by Sennet as ‘dead public spaces,’ (Sennet 1992, 12-16) these aesthetically pleasing sites facilitate incongruous interactions amongst individuals by degrading any semblance of political and democratic representation. This notion is reinforced further by a sanitization of space through preemptive safety measures that exclude and control public streets and spaces.

2.10. Revanchism Realized

Creative city governance has implemented a series of policies and practices dedicated to removing the homeless, panhandlers, loitering youth, unlicensed street vendors and drug-dealers from the public while providing safe passage for desirable consumers attempting to negotiate the public and private spheres (Lippert 2012, 170). After years of neglect and mismanagement by the state (casualties of neoliberal policy), ‘public geography’ has slowly been reimagined to reflect ideals of the bourgeois public. This has turned city streets and public spaces into commodified spaces ensuring a profitable business climate and consolidation of “the city center as a retail and leisure space for affluent customers” (Peyroux, Putz & Glasze 2012, 113). Through a series of initiatives, such as Ontario’s *Safe Streets Act*⁵, agents of the modern city are seeking to “control the behavior and space such that homeless people simply cannot do what they must do in order to survive without breaking laws” (Mitchell 1997, 307). Ensuring the exclusion of undesirable bodies from public spaces has required a variety of precautionary urban safety ‘measures’ that have altered and reformed the physical and social makeup of the contemporary urban landscape.

⁵ Ontario “Safe Streets Act, 1999, S.O. 1999, c.8,” *Search Laws*, <http://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/99s08>

The most visible of changes are those happening ‘on-the-ground’. Patrol teams and CCTV have become facets of everyday urban life. Uniformed police and CCTV routinely scan downtown spaces to “deter behavior that may create a sense of insecurity or otherwise damage the ongoing re-making of the downtown’s image” (Sleiman & Lippert 2010, 328). The former, consisting of downtown ambassador teams and uniformed police are equipped with training procedures specific to dealing with any possible scenarios that may unfold in the field (Sleiman & Lippert 2010, 320). Police presence exists in a variety of ways, from “foot patrol, uniformed and plain-clothes officers, bicycles, marked and unmarked vehicles, motorcycles, and possibly horses” (Berkley & Thayer 2000, 481). Police assume their traditional role of ‘eyes and ears’ on the street and are expected to defuse any potential crimes and undesirable activity (Lippert 2012, 179). However, in the modern city, during times when neither ambassadors nor police services are present, CCTV substantiates the need for relentless ‘eyes on the street’ and a deterrent to vagrancy.

Major cities and small towns alike have gradually implemented open-street CCTV. Depending on location and place, CCTV is controlled and monitored by law enforcement officials, private agencies, or in some cases, a combination of both.⁶ Covered by smoked-out plastic domes, cameras are able to tilt, pan, zoom and rotate 360 degrees without giving away the direction in which they are pointing (Haggerty et al. 2008, 43). Proponents suggest surveillance improves “police crime detection and response, additional investigation support, increased ability to conduct crowd management, target-

⁶ Danielle Dawson, Patrick Derby, Aaron Doyle, Chiara Fonio, Laura Huey, Mat Johnson, Stephanie Leman-Langlois, Randy Lippert, David Lyon, Anne-Marie Pratte, Emily Smith, Kevin Walby, Blair Wilkinson, “A Report on Camera Surveillance in Canada Part Two; Surveillance Camera Awareness Network (SCAN), December 2009, http://www.sscqueens.org/sites/default/files/SCAN_Report_Phase2_Dec_18_2009.pdf

hardening, counter-terrorism, reductions in violent crime and improvements in local safety” (Haggerty et al 2008, 47). In the first stages of urban renewal, CCTV and increased police presence remain the prerequisite, however, greater investment and emphasis in specific spaces can lead to a more subtle and devious method of deviant deterrents, defined formally as ‘Criminal Prevention through Environmental Design’ (CPTED).

This form of preventative measure is not “superimposed on, but grounded in, the architectural and urban design” of public places (Van Melik et al. 2007, 27). The objective of CPTED is to transform the built environment through specific landscape design capable of reducing criminal activity while simultaneously alleviating the general perceptions of rampant crime (Parnaby 2006, 2). By incorporating the principle objectives of CPTED into the actual planning, design and function of urban space, CPTED is cleansed “of its inherently subjective elements and, in the process, works to mitigate any political misgivings that it may generate in the wake of its application” (Parnaby 2006, 9). Quite simply, CPTED works within the framework of neoliberal governance by excluding individuals based upon their inability to act and perform within the expectations and functions of the contemporary urban spaces. In other words, individuals are permitted to access creative city spaces based upon their ability to practice acts of consumption.

The dissection of a hegemonic neoliberalism both ‘out-there’ and ‘in-here,’ traces and scrutinizes the ‘glocal’ relationship between international ideological policies and street-level actualizations. Neoliberalism exists at all scales, in various permutations and specific expressions and practices as discourse. If approaching the structural framework

from top to bottom, it becomes extremely difficult to allocate where and how these changes unfold. However, by examining a specific time, place and space, the impact and influences of neoliberal ideologies becomes more manageable. This becomes evident in the analysis of contemporary city centres, which since the 1980s have become the epicenters of neoliberal discourse and practice. Critically investigating neoliberalism infused policies and planning practices of Hamilton, Ontario, but posed as the creative class urbanism, it is possible to interpret the changes to the built environment as a neoliberal causation and a starting point for resistance.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0. Field of Study

Growing up in Hamilton I have witnessed the struggle of a family operated business coping with neoliberal restructuring. At one time, Megna Real Estate and Brokerage was a successful family operated business, employing over one hundred Hamiltonians. Along with other urban developers, Megna Real Estate was at the forefront of local development. However, by the mid-nineties, as national and global competition moved into local territory, the company struggled to remain competitive. As of today, Megna Real Estate employs less than ten people. More recently, and as a student of critical human geography, I have become an informed spectator, observing Hamilton's aggressive pursuit of creative city revitalization in the context of neoliberal policy. As both a student and citizen in the midst of these urban renewal processes, it was only natural that Hamilton would become the focus of my thesis. Specifically, I am interested in understanding how discourses are responsible for producing a particular neoliberal hegemony through reference to a very narrowly defined truths concerning urban development. My decision to focus on the production of localized truths, as found in the press, rather than municipal planning documents or council minutes, is based upon the assumption that unlike major cities such as, Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal, mid-sized Canadian cities like Hamilton are predominantly informed by only one major newspaper, in this case: the *Hamilton Spectator*. With a daily readership that extends outside Hamilton's boundary, the *Spectator* plays an important role in creating a discursive reality depicting Hamilton as a vibrant post-industrial urban center.

3.1. Discourse and Discourse Analysis

Discourse has a series of different definitions that extend across a variety of distinct disciplines (Tonkiss, 2012; Rose 2012; Waitt 2010; Cresswell 2009). In the field of human geography, researchers are primarily “concerned with the connections between power, knowledge and spatiality” (Cresswell 2009). Relying heavily on the work of Michael Foucault (1980), geographers using this framework, seek to uncover and analyze a “specific series of representations and practices through which meanings are produced, identities constituted, social relations established, and political and ethical outcomes made more or less possible” (Cresswell 2009, 166). In much more simpler terms, Gillian Rose describes discourse as “a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it” (Rose 2012, 190). Researchers, then, attempt to uncover ways in which social realities and truths are constructed and naturalized (Waitt 2010, 218). This can be achieved by uncovering what Foucault describes as “power/knowledge” relations and their wider acceptance as normalized truths that are produced, and reproduced by human agents (Rose 2012, 193). These discursive truths exist in a variety of different forms: visual, verbal, textual, material and in practice, all of which “cohere around the production and circulation of knowledge” (v. Rose 2012, 190; Waitt 2010, 218). The goal of this thesis is to analyze one vehicle of knowledge/truth production as it relates to Hamilton’s urban revitalization efforts. In particular, I focus on how Hamilton’s dominant newspaper (*The Hamilton Spectator*) and affiliated producers of knowledge, contribute, sustain and inform the creative city discourse and legitimize its material impact on the built environment.

There are no “strict rules of method for analyzing discourse,” but there are

fundamental steps that any method of discourse analysis could use: (1) selecting and approaching data, (2) sorting, coding and analyzing data, (3) presenting the analysis (Tonkiss 2012, 376). Based upon these loosely structured research parameters, I conducted a discourse analysis of local newspapers and affiliated media outlets (blogs, independent newspapers and social media platforms) as they relate to Hamilton's creative city revitalization efforts. Newspapers, as vehicles of public discourse are responsible for the constructing and reconstruction of "social problems, crises, enemies and, and leaders and so creates a succession of threats and reassurances (Edelman 1988, 1). The competition and conflict that arises from newspaper reporting (problems, problem-solvers & solutions) helps define social life, but also allocates power to those with socially acceptable 'solutions'. According to Shortell (2011, 433), "the problem of social morality is constructed" through claims made by particular social actors concerning various social issues. This thesis is interested specifically in how certain truth claims and problems of social morality regard urban renewal practices are framed in the Hamilton context (v. Shortell 2011, 433)

3.2. Selecting Data

Because so much of the creative city discourse has its roots in Richard Florida's canon (1995, 2002, 2002b, 2010, 2012) and because Hamilton planning documents (*Putting People First*, 2004; *Love Your City*, 2013; *Hamilton Economic Development*, 2010 etc.) highlight this lineage, I used these sources as a guide to create a list of prominent key words (*creativity, new knowledge economy, creative cluster, talent, technology, tolerance, innovation, authenticity, organic, vibrant, bohemian, urban renaissance/renewal, diverse, cool* etc.). Once I had identified these key terms, I began to

gather materials from the *Hamilton Spectator* and similar media sources through the process of ‘purposive sampling’. Specific key terms and ideas, as described in Florida’s creative city work, were searched for, and coded, in City of Hamilton municipal databases, local historical archives, *Spectator*-specific databases, and social media outlets archives. I also searched for silences, the ideas and themes that neither Florida nor the sources described above given consideration to in their dialogue. This includes issues like homelessness, unemployment, precarious work and displacement.

3.2.1. Municipal Documents

The most important sources in terms of the city’s redevelopment goals are found in its municipal documents, policies and council minutes. For this study, I analyzed Hamilton City Council documents (2005-2014) and Hamilton Municipal Planning Documents (2002-2014). The official City of Hamilton website (<http://www.hamilton.ca/index.htm>) offered immediate and comprehensive access. The section, ‘Projects and Initiatives’ (<http://www.hamilton.ca/ProjectsInitiatives/>) was particularly important for this project. As described above, my analysis of municipal documents consisted of:

- *Putting People First: The New Land Use Plan for Downtown Hamilton* (March 2004)
- *Love your City Cultural Policy and Plan: Transforming Hamilton Through Culture* (October 2013)
- *City of Hamilton Site Plan Guidelines* (September 2003)
- *Gore Park Master Plan* (September 2009)

- *Gore Park Pedestrian Initiative* (February 2013)
- *Outdoor Café Guidelines* (March 2004)
- *City of Hamilton Economic Development 2010-2015* (2010)

3.2.2. Daily Newspaper – The *Hamilton Spectator*

The pages of the *Hamilton Spectator* supply most of the data for this research. As the city's historically dominant newspaper, the material offers a rich source of data regarding the topic under investigation (v.Tonkiss 2012). In publication since 1846, *The Hamilton Spectator* has changed ownership on three different occasions. As of today, the paper is owned and distributed by the *Metroland Media Group*, a subsidiary of the *Torstar Corporation*. The newspaper has a daily readership of roughly 260,000 people and is circulated six days a week. The '*Spec's*' distribution stretches east towards Oakville and as far west as Niagara Falls. After being purchased by *Torstar* in 1999, the *Spectator* has assumed a more centrist political stance. Structurally, the paper abides by a basic editorial template providing information ranging from local news to lifestyle. All the newspaper articles gathered for this project were attained through the *Hamilton Spectator's* archives in both print and virtual form.

3.2.3. Online News Media - *CBC Hamilton*

In 2011, CBC announced the set-up of a local online digital service in Hamilton as part of the five-year strategic plan "Everyone, Every Way". According to the CBC Website, the local service "will connect Hamiltonians to their neighbourhood, their city, their country and CBC whenever and wherever they are in a way no one else is doing in

Canada.”⁷ According to the 2011 press release, “the new digital service will provide an up to the minute, as well as a “look ahead” view of local news, weather, events and other “need to know” information. The CBC Hamilton website is accessible on all mobile technologies: smartphones, desktop/laptop computers and tablet devices,”⁸ As an extension of this mobile platform, the website also provides users with moderated ‘virtual space’ for tweets, press releases, blog posts and public listings from a local audience. Lastly, the website provides users with a ‘Google Map’ that allows viewers access to news based on local neighbourhoods. Accessibility to information and up-to-the-minute updates on personal devices (personal notifications on cellular device, social media alerts on laptop) allowed for a consistent stream of news and information pertaining to Hamilton.

3.2.4. Online Blogs/Social Media

Hamilton has a thriving online community dedicated to Hamilton’s creative city renaissance. Slogans such as, “Art is the New Steel” and “You can do anything in Hamilton” adorn the interface of independent newsletters and blogs, complimented by hi-definition photographs of Hamilton’s ‘coolest spots’. The basic premise of these discursive channels is to promote Hamilton’s up-and-coming restaurants, nightclubs, cafes, and retail spaces (v. Zukin 2010). One of the first on-line blogs embracing this format, ‘Beaux Mondes’ (beaux-mondes.com) has had considerable influence by encompassing all things ‘trendy’ around Hamilton. As a result of its local influence and exposure, a variety of Hamilton oriented media sources have been established. Of these the following online sites are used as data: *Urbanicity.ca* , *Cut from Steel.com*, *Beaux-*

⁷ <http://www.cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/media-centre/2011/11/01/>

⁸ <http://www.cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/media-centre/2011/11/01/>

Mondes.com, *@IheartHamilton*, *@RebuildHamilton*, *@TheRealCHANRY*, *thismustbetheplace.ca*. In most cases, these blogs exist across multi-platforms, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook the primary sites of interest. I followed the social media by various institutions involved in the revitalization process and have documented Facebook ‘status updates’ and collected Twitter ‘tweets’ from the following organizations: ‘CBC Hamilton’, ‘Downtown Hamilton B.I.A’, ‘Tourism Hamilton’, ‘Hamilton Seen’, ‘Hamilton Live’, ‘Hamilton Arts Council’, ‘James Street North Studio (James North Art Collective)’ and the ‘James Street North Supercrawl’ and ‘Urbanicity’.

3.2.5. Silent Discourses

‘Silences’ exist in all texts (Tonkiss 2012, 379). Researchers, then, must “read *along* with the meanings that are being created, to look at the way the text is organized and to pay attention to how things are being said...to read *against* the grain of the text, to look for silences or gaps” (Tonkiss, 2012, 379). In this research, textual silences on issues of homelessness, policing, criminalization, socio-economic exclusion, lack of affordable housing and classism, became readily apparent. In the material where these issues are addressed, they are rarely connected to the creative city discourse and Hamilton’s pursuit of a vibrant cultural economy. By highlighting such ‘silent truths’ I hope to put the discourses under scrutiny (neoliberal urbanism/creative city) into a wider interpretive context (Tonkiss 2012).

3.3. Doing Discourse Analysis

Data collection required countless hours of reading and coding the data that was mined from Municipal databases, library archives, newspaper-specific database and online archives and forum. The information was assorted by type, topic, date, and place.

For example, any issues regarding ‘urban grit’ on James Street North were organized by day, month and year. This sorting process was done for all data.

Using the compiled list of key terms and ideas, I began a process of coding the material for frequency, relevancy and richness (v. Rose 2012, 210). Aside from the data based upon the Florida-based themes, I also searched for silences, the things that neither Florida nor the newspapers seemed to consider part of the dialogue. This included things like homelessness, unemployment, displacement, etc. Once I had mined and extracted key themes, these ‘silent truths’ began to emerge just as strongly; marked by their conspicuous absence rather than their presence.

I retrieved articles published between 1945-2002 through the Local History & Archives Department of Hamilton Public Library. Presented in Ch.4, this data was necessary, along with secondary sources on the topic, to establish a link between globalized neoliberal hegemony and its influence on Hamilton’s urban landscape. I gained access to articles published after 2002 through The *Hamilton Spectator*’s online database. Though usually reserved for employees of the paper, I was granted access to the database through personal connections with a current employee. Once lists were compiled, key terms were run through an online generator. All articles between 2002-2015 with the word in the article were then printed, and then sifted through for relevance. After careful reading of the sample, I discovered fourteen key words and phrases that became the basis for my searches: “creative city” (n=1897), “creative class” (n=801), Hamilton Arts and Culture (n=68), James Street North (n=1883), Gentrification (n=52), Gore Park (n=1152), Downtown Hamilton Public Space (n=100), Downtown Revitalization (n=693), Downtown Hamilton (n=12716), ArtCrawl/Supercrawl (n=439),

Tourism Hamilton (n=2409), Knowledge-Economy (n=470) and Hamilton Downtown Economy (n=73).

In addition, and in order to eliminate articles with minimal relevance, I employed several other key terms were employed, these included: “*revival*”, ‘*revitalization*’, ‘*commerce*’ and ‘*Hamilton as*’. In order to access articles pertaining specifically to Hamilton’s urban development, I employed a series of tertiary terms. These consisted of: “beautification” (n=71), “safety” (n=935), morality (n=21), cleanliness (n=63), surveillance (n=249), entertainment (n=1204), young professionals (n=45), tolerance (n=71), culture (n=948), inclusion (n=88) and finally, exclusion (n=27). After I examined each of the articles for validity and relevance, I was left with three hundred and twenty five articles, spanning from 2002 to 2015. In order to read the sources for silences, specifically the newspaper, I looked for silent voices as described in academic literature (Harvey 1989, 1976, 2006; Mitchell 1997, 2003, 2009; Peck 2014; Smith 1979, 1996). Specifically, I searched the data for issues impacting marginalized populations, homelessness, criminalization of space and displacement. I then searched for the online and social media links mentioned in the articles. I began with online material and then social media posts. Again, using the same set of search terms, I collected data from each document.

Once data was selected and coded, it was sorted in folders on a personal computer on a day-to-day basis by year, keyword and source. This was done for all material except for data mined from local archives. This material was photocopied and kept in binders. Similar to online sources, this material was sorted by day, month, year and place. Using the list of Floridian terms and common keywords found in the data, I searched each

document for matching key ideas, themes and terms. All the documents mentioned above were searched and coded according to the terms found, then organized, and finally connected (Tonkiss 2012, 378). When linking different sources together, I was trying to understand how each is used to create a set of truths around Hamilton. Specifically, what is wrong with the urban core, in terms of infrastructure and people, and how to fix it? The latter was of greatest interest to this project. As I will show, Hamilton's creative city truth claims exist in a variety of different forms, but most intriguing to me are those found in text.

Three factors helped guide the decisions regarding the importance of different types of discursive text. Firstly, sources with two or more 'keywords' in the title, such as "*CREATIVE HAMILTONIANS: Culture ... the lifeblood of our city*", were rated highest. Secondly, articles found in certain sections of the newspaper, such as *Local* and/or *Business*, were weighted with greater importance over those, for example, in the *Go* (a guide to local activities and events) section. This would be the same measure for online articles and social media content. Lastly, once articles were narrowed down by title and section, relevancy was determined by editorial exposure. For example, an article on Local A1 was viewed with greater priority over an article found on A3, etc. In regards to sources extracted from the online archive, those articles ranking higher on the website 'list' had greater relativity over others. The following section will outline and describe the different segments of *The Hamilton Spectator* in relation to the overall project and research methods.

The 'Specs' *Local* section provides the greatest insight regarding Hamilton's discursive urban revitalization process. Usually running ten pages, the *Local* section has

contributed a rather large portion of information for this particular research project. The material offers a wide variety of issues regarding this topic; ranging from public space renovation to street surveillance. The material is presented as unbiased and impartial to influences outside of the editorial office, however, as will be discussed later, a large majority of what is written in this section is a reflection and echo of the ideas found in the Spectators *Business* section. Naturally, the *Business* section focuses on economic issues pertinent, but not limited to Hamilton. This section usually ranges from three to five pages. However, of greater importance is the inset found within the business section entitled *Hamilton Business*. Launched in 2012, this sub-section can run upwards of twenty pages in text, advertisements and images (HB1-HB20) on matters specific to business in Hamilton. This section provides in-depth coverage of regarding, “Young Professionals”, “Companies to watch” and “People to watch”. In order to compliment and target their desired audience, *Hamilton Business* encourages readers to visit their accompanying website (hamiltonbusiness.com) for further insight into pressing issues, and related topics. The website can be accessed through the Hamilton Spectator page or by directly typing in the URL listed above. Similar to its paper counterpart, the online segment is visually appealing; blatantly directed towards the desired audience of young, creative Hamiltonians, an issue that will be addressed later in this research. Lastly, the *Forum* and *Opinion* section concludes this newspaper analysis. This section provides insight into the sentiments of Hamiltonian’s subscribed to the daily newspaper. In conjunction with paid accessibility, opinion pieces are susceptible to moderation while those deemed inappropriate are excluded entirely; this is the case for both virtual and print publications.

3.4. Why Discourse Analysis?

I used discourse analysis to help illustrate the truth-claims made by local media sources and affiliated news and social outlets. Given the nature of these sources, it is possible to demonstrate how these local truths are produced and what to what extent they are intertextual. By analyzing the claims made in the local newspaper and their frequency it is possible to distinguish the dominant narrative, as well as those truths, that help shape a common understanding of social realm. As I am concerned with the “examination of meaning, and often complex processes through which social meanings are produced” (Tonkiss 2012, 380), I hope to demonstrate how media based truth-claims, are not only informed by an overarching creative city discourse, but is informed by a dominant neoliberal hegemony.

As such, it should be noted that this thesis project has limitations. By focussing specifically on the dominant newspaper and affiliated media sources, the scope of the research remains limited. For example, if I had used a technological tool such as the SPSS Statistics software package, I could have better described the data set I in terms of how often key words and phrases media sources contained. Furthermore, primary statistical data such as real estate values, poverty rates, and local cost of living could have proven extremely useful. By providing statistical data, I might have been able to interrogate media statements pertaining to ideas of gentrification, social exclusion, lack of affordable housing, etc. Lastly, and perhaps most useful for this specific research project, a series of auto-ethnographic interviews with people involved and affected by downtown change might have been useful. Urban managers, city boosters, local business community and citizens could have provided deep insights into their day-to-day

experiences. This would have provided an incredibly rich source of data that could have been compared and contrasted with the official media reports presented throughout this thesis.

Chapter 4: Neoliberalizing Hamilton

4.0. From Manufacturing to Creativity

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a historical and discursive timeline (1945-2002) of Canadian neoliberalism and its progression across scales, from the national to the local (Hamilton). By framing neoliberal hegemony as a major protagonist of Hamilton's deindustrialization process and subsequent creative city ambition (v. Harvey 2005; Hackworth 2007; Peck & Tickell 2002; Brenner & Theodore 2005), it is possible to justify my claims that contemporary discourses, as they exist in the local media, are reproductions of neoliberal urbanism, vital to reshaping Hamilton's social and material realities. As Harvey suggests, "capitalist society must of necessity create a physical landscape – a mass of humanely constructed physical resources – in its own image, broadly appropriate to the purposes of production and reproduction".

According to David Ley, this process began, in earnest during the 1980s. This era was dominated by a "radical political economy and neo-conservative political culture" that promoted ideas of "privatization, deregulation, partnerships with the private sector, cutbacks to the welfare state, a disciplinary relationship with labor, and promises to downsize government" (Ley 2004, 151). The global reach of socio-political institutions supportive of neoliberal ideas created what Ley describes as a "master discourse reproduced in intellectual, policy and corporate circles on both the political right and the political left" (Ley 2004, 152). Within the urban setting, this process of neoliberal restructuring caused periods of decline, stagnation and now, revival. Under the guise of creative city revitalization, urban landscapes across North America reflect a neo-bourgeoisie worldview preferring 'production for profit over production for use' (Harvey

1976, 265; 271).

As will be demonstrated in this chapter, the last twenty-five years have borne witness to a neoliberal master discourse that has descended from the ‘global to the local,’ (Swyngedouw, 1997; Peck & Tickell 2002). This chapter traces this process of Canadian neoliberal restructuring and how it has impacted the material environment in the mid-sized city of Hamilton, Ontario.

4.1. Historical Hamilton

Since its foundation in 1816, Hamilton has embraced a series of monikers over the course of its nearly two hundred-year history. From ‘Ambitious City’ to the ‘Pittsburgh of Canada’ (the former currently experiencing a popular resurgence). However, it was after the Second World War, during what most historians describe as North America’s ‘Golden Years,’ (Freeman 2001, 152) that Hamilton would become the ‘Steel City’. Strengthened by an expansive post-war manufacturing base, Hamilton boasted a strong working middle class, low levels of income inequality and a flourishing downtown community. Like most twentieth-century industrial cities, the public spaces of the core was characteristic of a buoyant ‘Jacobsian’ public reality. Over time, as global flows and processes intertwined with local socio-economic dynamics, Hamilton’s urban realities began to shift. These ‘glocal’ (Swyngedouw, 1997) processes systematically dismantled Hamilton’s core urban demographic, encouraging outward migration towards the urban periphery. By the late 1980s, with globalization and neoliberal policies fully entrenched in the flows and processes of contemporary society, Hamilton had become a shell of its former self.

Despite massive urban revitalization efforts throughout the 1960s and 1970s

(outlined below), a majority of inner city residents, businesses and consumers had already left the core, creating a downtown that would be perceived as dangerous and desolate. In 2002, after decades of decline, a few artists and ‘creative’ workers began renting the cheap spaces offered throughout the core. These new residents embraced by city boosters, and portrayed as living indications of Hamilton’s urban revitalization and creative city potential. Since 2002, Hamilton has pursued and supported creative city development in order to revivify the inner city as an experiential destination for the new bourgeois creative class. This trajectory, from formidable manufacturing center to artsy-coffee locale - “domestication by cappuccino” (Atkinson 2003) – is similar to the experiences of most North American cities.

4.2. 1945-1960: Before Neoliberalism

After the ‘Great Depression’ and Second World War, Canadians embraced a political and economic transition toward a welfare state and government regulation. Influenced by ‘Keynesian’ economics, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent’s federal government implemented a variety of social reform programs to address issues of public housing, federal hospital grants and assistance for both the disabled and elderly. By 1956, the “Unemployment Assistance Act” was legislated, followed the next year by permanent programs in health care, education, housing and rehabilitation. By the early seventies, federal investment in social welfare programs had begun to dwindle.

In Hamilton, federal policies were implemented at varying degrees. Led by mayoral-electorate Lloyd D. Jackson, Hamilton would enjoy two decades of a ‘real golden era’⁹. Much of the city’s success can be attributed to the massive manufacturing

⁹ “Politicians guide to growth,” *Hamilton Spectator*, June 27, 1967.

sector and competent welfare programs. Like most North American cities, wartime demand and rapid industrial growth contributed to Hamilton's economy, civic health and overall prosperity. Aside from the citywide strike of 1946, Hamilton's two major manufacturing employers and local unions enjoyed considerable economic stability by maintaining a cordial, if forced, relationship (Freeman 2001, 145). In 1948, both Dofasco and Stelco had surpassed peak wartime output production. Stelco in particular, was consistently 'shattering' its own records of output production (Weaver 1982, 163)¹⁰. By 1954, Hamilton industry routinely achieved records in output and profits, feats acknowledged by Local union 1005. As manufacturing continued to make profitable gains, union leaders demanded greater corporate recognition of workers rights, medical coverage for worker families and "a group life insurance plan, to which the company will contribute an average of 3.3 cents per hour and the employee 2.9 cents per hour."¹¹ The relationship between steel and union was integral to the perceived success of the 'golden era' and the basic principles of the welfare state. In Hamilton, the union served as a representative for immigrants and the unemployed, as numbers increased, so too did the importance and necessity for civic organization and complimentary social welfare programs (Weaver 1982, 154-160).

This 'need' was a direct cause of Hamilton's expanding and profitable steel mills. Heavy in-migration of workers into the city's core increased Hamilton's population to 100,000 in just over a decade. In an effort to alleviate unemployment and homelessness, proposed solutions ranged from low-rental housing, improved traffic flow, civic beautification programs and new construction projects such as city hall, the country

¹⁰ "Several records shattered in '48 by Steel Company," *Hamilton Spectator*, January 20, 1949.

¹¹ "Company and employees to contribute toward better welfare plan," *Hamilton Spectator*, September 2, 1954.

courthouse, the Art Gallery and Macassa Lodge¹². The city of Hamilton embarked on a series of civil projects focused upon “the necessities of the life of a modern city... namely, water, sewers, police and fire protection, education, hospitalization, roads, sidewalks, parks and playgrounds”¹³. The intent of Hamilton’s early politicians, city builders and developers was to create a built environment that provided citizens with the basic necessities and services of life, an urban landscape that was “no mean city”¹⁴. Issues such as social security, public health and welfare services, pensions, unemployment and subsidized housing were priorities for Hamilton’s civic leaders.

The coalescing of social welfare programs and capitalist prosperity provided a large population of immigrants, returning veterans and home-front laborers with an opportunity to purchase modern conveniences and luxury goods for their low-mortgaged suburban homes (Weaver 1982, 163; Freeman 2001, 154). Wartime factories maintained relevancy by retrofitting operations to produce and distribute middle class goods such as “refrigerators, stoves, vacuum cleaners, television sets, radios and multiplicity of gadgets” (Melville 1983, 99). Beyond the profitability of the steel mills and former wartime factories, the service economy also experienced growth. At the conclusion of WWII, only four hundred local businesses had registered with Hamilton council. By 1960, this number had ballooned to 4,000. These businesses ranged from restaurants, grocery and butcher stores, agencies, mobile film firms, concrete producers, real estate offices, car sales rooms, beauty parlors and rug makers, most of which were locally owned and operated¹⁵. The emergence of new localized businesses translated to a

¹² Bailey T. Melville, *Hamilton: Chronicle of a City* (Toronto: Windsor Publications Ltd. 1983), 106.

¹³ “Views on city’s problems given by controllers: Topics range from litter to taxation,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 3, 1950.

¹⁴ “Members of city council set sights high,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 8, 1952.

¹⁵ “New business ventures are very numerous,” *Hamilton Spectator*, November 27, 1945.

Milford L. Smith, “Output passes \$1,100,000,000,” *Hamilton Spectator*, November 12, 1960.

prosperous average income: according to one *Spectator* report, “[t]he city’s average weekly wages and salaries, in fact, at \$83.38 in March stood higher than those of Toronto (\$78.26), Montreal (\$74.12) and Vancouver (\$80.61), while the average for Canada was \$74.50¹⁶. In 1965, Hamilton had a 96.3 percent workforce and fewer persons (approximately 4,900) on city welfare¹⁷. The prosperity of the time was unprecedented, however its longevity and persistence would be limited. As the 1960s unfolded, Hamilton expanded beyond the urban boundary, and had begun to falter under the pressures of larger economic flows and processes, including the early signs of post-industrialism.

Over the next decade, the social and economic landscape of Hamilton’s downtown declined despite a grandiose urban revitalization. Unfortunately, by the 1970s, the ‘steel’ backbone of Hamilton’s economy began to weaken, resulting in a steady rise of local unemployment, a gradual rise in homelessness, and an urban landscape missing an earlier buoyancy (Weber & Fincher 1987, 239). The realities of globalization from the 1960s to the 1990s affected Hamilton’s urban landscape “to such an extent that stores were sitting vacant, movie theatres had emptied, and even the market was losing business. The once jammed, noisy downtown streets that had so much life and vitality were showing clear signs of decay” (Freeman 2001, 157). The decision to relocate Stelco’s head office to Toronto and establish a production facility in Nanticoke was a clear signifier of the times, and for some, a betrayal of Hamilton’s loyalty to the company (Freeman 2001, 167). However, Stelco was one of many manufacturing companies that relocated out of the Steel City. Over the next twenty-five years, Hoover [1966], Slater Steel [1967], Coca Cola [1982], Otis Elevator [1987] and Firestone [1988] all left Hamilton in search of a

¹⁶ Milford L. Smith, “Output passes \$1,100,000,000,” *Hamilton Spectator*, November 12, 1960.

¹⁷ Frank Adams, “It’s hard to be poor in the Ambitious City,” *Globe and Mail*, April 21, 1965.

more profitable bottom line (Freeman 2001). The economic landscape had changed, a mass exodus of major employers, compounded by impending suburbanization, growing vehicle ownership and Toronto's exponential economic development, made it increasingly difficult for the city to attract and retain any profitable industry, leaving council with very few options, and even less employment.

4.3. 1970-1990's: The Rise of Canadian Neoliberalism

Increased capital mobility, economical instability and the structural power of globalization prompted the widely acknowledged shift from a Keynesian-welfare state towards neoliberal form of urban governance. In Canada, similar to American institutions like the 'Chicago School' (v. Harvey 2004), this shift has been aided and abetted by curators of institutional knowledge. In the Canadian context, the 'Five Policy Groups' (Conference Board of Canada, 1954; C.D. Howe Institute, 1958; Business Council on National Issues, 1976; Fraser Institute, 1974; Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, 1994) have all, to varying degrees, had active involvement in the "consolidation of neoliberal hegemony in Canadian public policy" (Carroll & Shaw 2001). Described as "class-wide business activism," these institutional groups infiltrated Canada's political-cultural community and began a discursive process of moulding society to become intricately connected and informed by "big capital, state and media" through the creation of "programs and strategies which define the 'national interest' in a given policy domain" (2001, 196). By the end of the eighties, production of neoliberal knowledge and consolidation of its hegemony had been politically affirmed on the national stage.

Coming to power in 1984, former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservatives implemented a series of deregulation policies akin to Reaganism and

Thatcherism, which minimized the role of the state in the social lives of its citizens (Tupper & Doern 1988, 26). The basis of Mulroney's political and economic agenda was to promote economic renewal through free market trade, overall expenditure restraint and tight fiscal management (Tupper & Doern 1988, 26-27). In order to guide Canadians through the transition, a Conservative Task Force was assembled to assess profitability of all Crown Corporations. All 'non-profitable' assets deemed 'non-symbolic' to Canada's national identity were sold (Drache & Gertler 1991, 296). In 1985, with Conservatives firmly entrenched in parliament, Mulroney unveiled the 'Budget Speech'. The emphasis on 'privatization', 'new profit orientation' and 'an appreciation for competition both domestically and abroad' confirmed the new direction of Canadian socio-economic policies. This was the beginning of Canadian Neoliberalism (v. Tupper & Doern 1988, 402). Not only did this signal the political shift away from the welfare state, but also confirmed Canada's role in the global economy, laying the groundwork for the impending Canadian/American Free Trade Agreement.

4.4. Neoliberal Hamilton

The global shift towards neoliberal economic governance had different outcomes across the developed world, but for Hamiltonians, it represented the end of manufacturing dominance and local 'ambition'. The continental trade pact, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), was met with disdain and agitation. Business owners demanded transparency from the municipal government in hopes of understanding the impact NAFTA and its repercussion on the local economic landscape¹⁸. Consensus amongst politicians, unions and business leaders were dubious. Paul Phoenix, former president of

¹⁸ "Political Outlook: Hamilton Journal Forecast," *Hamilton Spectator*, 1988.

Dofasco, unequivocally recognized that after the Free Trade Agreement, Hamilton would be divided between ‘winners and losers’. Ben Des Roches, leading member of the local steel workers union, said that “[i]f free trade goes into effect, it will be devastating to communities like Hamilton because of our great manufacturing base...We stand to lose much more than any other community in Canada¹⁹”. On October 4, 1987, Canada and America signed NAFTA. Some described it as ‘disastrous’, while others observed it was ‘just a bad deal for Canada’²⁰.

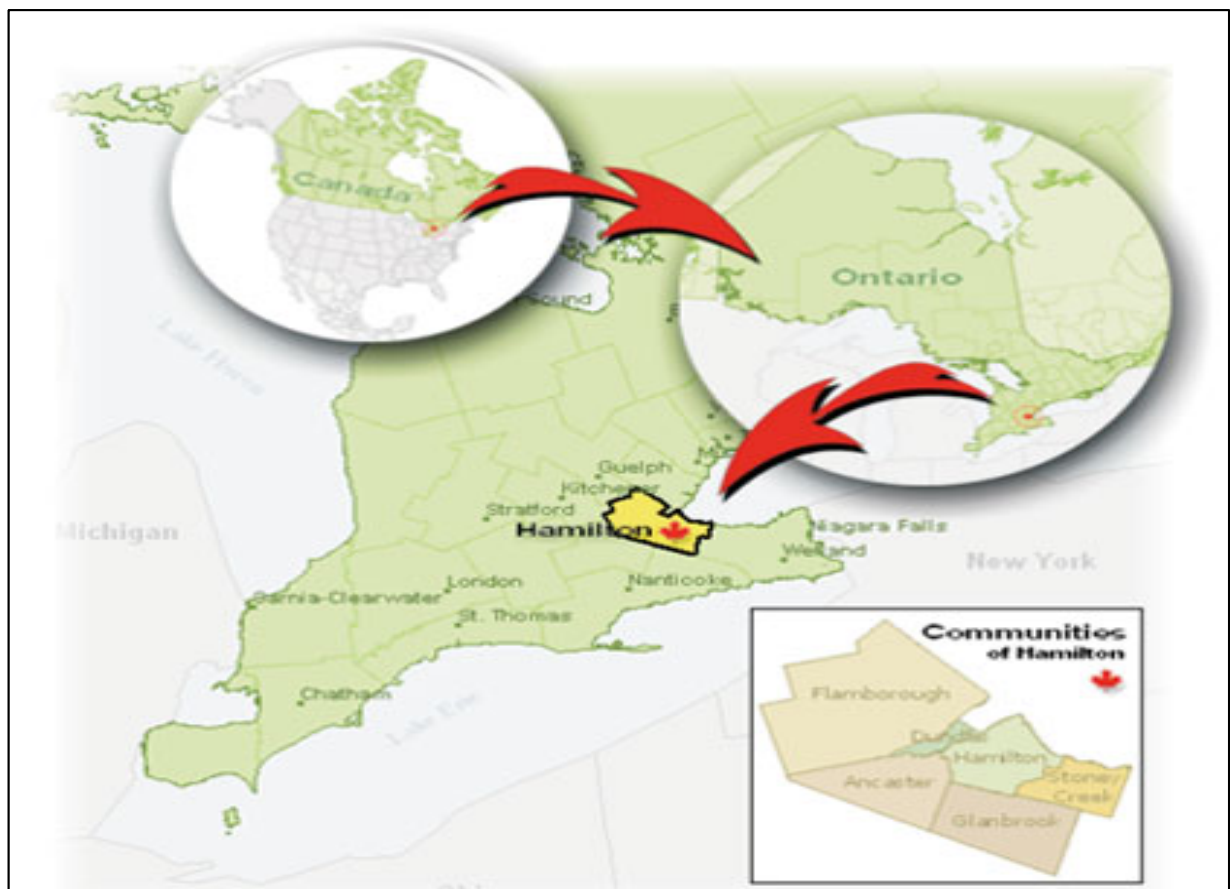


Figure 1: Geographical Location of Hamilton (Invest in Hamilton.ca, 2007)

¹⁹ Paul Mitchell, “Area leading in jobs stakes,” *Hamilton Spectator*, December 24, 1985.

²⁰ “Political Outlook: Hamilton Journal Forecast,” *Hamilton Spectator*, 1988.

In August of 1990, Hamilton experienced a sixty-eight percent rise in bankruptcies. By the end of the year Hamilton was the most economically crippled city in Canada²¹. Exasperated by an 11.8% jobless rate in 1993, deputy Liberal leader Sheila Copps resigns that in Hamilton, “it just seems like we’re losing jobs, left, right and center²²”. Chris Bart, at the time an associate professor at McMaster University, provided the *Spectator* with an even bleaker economic picture,

[t]he long-term consequence will be that for the next 20 years there will be a high level of structural unemployment in the country. There will not be enough jobs for all the people looking for work and 11-per cent unemployment will become the norm. Even for those who find jobs, many will be underemployed, earning far less money...Put bluntly, a large segment of that structural unemployment will remain until they retire and then die²³

In the fifteen years from 1981 to 1996, Hamilton’s manufacturing sector shrank from 63,030 to 32,030 (Freeman 2001). By 2007, both Dofasco and Stelco were sold off to foreign ownership, resulting in a strenuous restructuring process culminating in employee lockouts, a scale back on capital spending, alterations to vacation entitlements and reworked pension plans²⁴. The gradual eradication of Hamilton’s manufacturing base caused instability in the local economy. The dramatic emphasis on suburban development and the steady increase of big box sprawl- and jobs – only worsened the image of downtown Hamilton.

In a desperate attempt to counteract socio-economic abandonment of the core, Hamilton would endure periods of intense planning initiatives and physical restructuring aimed at rejuvenating the downtown (“Civic Square Project” [1970s], “Central Area Plan”[1980s] and “Downtown Action Plan” [1990s]. At the core of this impulse was a belief - which current planning and revitalization ideas recapitulate - that redevelopment

²¹ John Burman, “Recession bites deeper as business failures rise,” *Hamilton Spectator*, November 21, 1990.

²² Michael Davie, “It’s the economy,” *Hamilton Spectator*, October 16, 1993.

²³ Paul Mitchell, “No more middle ground,” *Hamilton Spectator*, December 7, 1992.

²⁴ Steve Arnold, Hamilton’s steel industry from birth, to boom and beyond,” *Hamilton Spectator*, February 11, 2012.

would attract industries from Toronto in “business service fields such as accounting, data processing, advertising, personnel placement agencies, aptitude testing etc.²⁵” -- in short, knowledge workers. In all instances, plans proposed a restructuring of the material landscape, one predicated on physical and social infrastructure capable of improving quality of life and public space for pedestrians, ‘inner-city leisure’ and greater livability for residents and tourists that would encourage investment from the private sector in residential, commercial and industrial sectors²⁶.

Despite these brief periods of hopeful urban renewal, Hamilton’s ambitions were soon tempered by the stark realities of the city’s socio-economic decline. According to a *Spectator* report, once the “cushioning effects of all the modern social apparatus - unemployment insurance, welfare and the assorted government fostered plans, programs, incentives, grants and loan guarantees” are taken away “the current economic pictures looks more like a full-fledged depression than anything else²⁷”. Before the end of the decade thousands of Hamiltonians found themselves unemployed, destitute, suicidal, or dealing with some degree of health, crime, drugs and alcohol issues²⁸. As local manufacturing companies struggled against cheap international labor, global prices, technological advances, and a consumer demand for cheaper products, Hamilton’s once strong middle class had lost considerable socio-economic power.

The dire economic situation was further compounded by the deterioration of Hamilton’s service and retail industry. Once regarded as the purveyor of future economic success, within just a year, no fewer than 200 local merchants had declared bankruptcy²⁹.

²⁵ James Carr, “Business and Finance – Review and Forecast,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 2, 1969, Hamilton Ontario.

²⁶ duTOIT Associates Limited, DI Design & Development Consultants Inc. and Baton Aschman Canada Limited, 1983.

²⁷ “Where the ‘Enemy’ Hides,” *Hamilton Spectator*, September 1, 1982.

²⁸ “Where the ‘Enemy’ Hides,” *Hamilton Spectator*, September 1, 1982.

²⁹ Matt Wickens, Brian Christmas and Paul Mitchell, “Another nail in the coffin,” *Hamilton Spectator*, July 16, 1982.

A bleak picture encapsulated by two days in the summer of 1982 when more than nine hundred residents from across the city lined up to apply for seventy positions at a new Barn Fruit Market on Hamilton mountain³⁰. Aside from a slight rise in low-wage work (such as those found at the Barn), Hamilton was unable to reset the local economy or attract any new industry. The result: a growing population of ‘food line regulars’ and the ‘nouveaux poor’³¹. Expansion of welfare rolls and growing number of ‘unemployment exhaustees’ altered middle-class lifestyles and threatened the social stability and securities of local Hamiltonians and Canadians alike. According to the local press, this reality was defined by the “ever-widening gap between elite, high-income managers and low-wage earners”³². By the end of the eighties, Hamilton’s political elite, urban managers and city planners had run out of ideas. The downtown would remain neglected. Guided by aims and initiatives of a provincial government keen on suburban expansion, Hamilton leaders invested their resources towards provincially guided amalgamation, the ‘downloading’ of provincial responsibilities, and construction of inner city highways.

4.5. 1995-2000’s: The Rise of Ontario’s “Common-Sense” Neoliberalism

Ontario’s ‘Common-Sense Revolution’ (1995) is a product “reminiscent of Thatcherism and Reaganism,” produced by the “uncompromisingly neoliberal provincial government under Tory Premier Mike Harris” and a “very small group of key ministers” (Keil 2002, 588; Graham & Phillips 1998, 187). Elected in 1995, Tories introduced neoliberal restructuring program created a provincial framework that realigned local governments under the nationalized neoliberal agenda, merging state strategies and

³⁰ Brian Christmas, “900 line up for 70 new jobs,” *Hamilton Spectator*, July 14, 1982.

³¹ Michael Davie, “City’s poor ‘desperately’ need food,” *Hamilton Spectator*, August 3, 1983, sec. Economic Conditions.

³² Michael Davie, “City’s poor ‘desperately’ need food,” *Hamilton Spectator*, August 3, 1983, sec. Economic Conditions.

projects with those at other scales of the Canadian government (Keil 2002, 594). Initially, the Ontario Tories ran on a platform proposing reduction of government intervention, the provincial deficit and a cut to provincial income tax (Graham & Phillips 1998, 177-178). The eventual outcome was a new ‘competitiveness agenda’ in the form of the “Who Does What” proposal. From the provincial standpoint, this restructuring of provincial and municipal responsibility would “promote more accountable, less costly and simplified government” through a process of disentanglement between municipal and provincial services. For municipalities however, this was interpreted as the downloading of provincial costs to local governments.

According to Keil (2002), the policy decisions employed by the Tory agenda attacked and undermined any lasting remnants of the Keynesian state. A series of deregulation policies, a reduction of labour, shrinking of unions, underfunding of public education and a direct onslaught against the poor,” destabilized a majority of Ontario’s social policies. Those that did remain in tact were ‘short-changed’ by a local municipal government working within the confines of a restricted fiscal budget (Keil 2002, 589). Despite constant reassurances from the province that changes would be ‘revenue neutral,’ municipal led-studies put local costs of the program at more than a billion dollars each year. This did not include maintenance and service costs (Graham & Phillips 1998, 188). As such, after weeks of political badgering, the Harris proposal was revised to better accommodate the city. Still, despite not inheriting the totality of these Tory reforms, the political and economic landscape of Ontario had already changed dramatically. Once local governments downloaded the new costs, there was very little provincial guidance on how to fend with the new economic realities of the Ontario landscape (Siegel 2003).

Instead, city managers had to find new ways, internally, to cope with burgeoning infrastructure costs, social service cuts and expansion through amalgamation.

4.6. 'Common Sense' Hamilton

A casualty of province-wide neoliberal restructuring was the further neglect and abandonment of downtowns across the province. In Hamilton, Barton Street Village was a physical testament to this. Once a central vein of urban commerce and culture, it's gradual withdrawal from the local economy created a neighborhood sequestered to a few struggling merchants. The Tories provincial programs furthered this degradation, despite a locally contrived effort to remediate the street.

Just before the summer of 1992, the persistent discourse of urban renewal, constant throughout Hamilton's evolution, was reignited and focused on the revitalization of Barton Street³³. Despite a general cynicism, former Mayor Bob Morrow urged Hamiltonians to "give Barton some breaks"³⁴. This public plea was accompanied in the local press with a series articles suggesting the City take action to clean the area of vagrants and absentee landlords³⁵. Conducive to these reports were articles praising the City's plans for a \$5 million Barton Street Art Village. With the help of the province, the Barton Street BIA would promote redevelopment of the strip with an "easily identifiable theme"³⁶. Former Alderman Bernie Morelli provided this vision. Speaking with the *Spectator*, Morelli outlines idea for the street: "an artists village complete with open-air

³³ Jack Macdonald, "A way to revive the Barton Street: Housing and jobs can be economically created and the area again have bustling neighborhoods," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 11, 1992.

Lee Prokaska, "Reviving Barton Street: City storefront office aims to help faded street regain life," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 24, 1992.

Kelly Graham, "Brightening up Barton: Pupils hope murals will add color to streetscape," *Hamilton Spectator*, July 22, 1992.

³⁴ Jim Poling, "Give Barton some breaks mayor urges," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 24, 1992.

Sharon Oosthoek, "Merchants cynical about mayor's pitch to rejuvenate Barton Street," *Hamilton Spectator*, February 15, 1993.
"Barton Street backers hope festival will provide a boost," *Hamilton Spectator*, September 17, 1993.

³⁵ Tami Paikin Nolan, "Barton Street is an area in need of drastic action," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 12, 1994.

Tami Paikin Nolan, "Barton plan works both sides of street: Governments moving quickly on redevelopment," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 15, 1994.

³⁶ "Barton St. art village plan not just empty bribe," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 22, 1994.

markets, garden apartments, studios, condominiums, a music hall and an international flavor that would draw a steady stream of enthusiastic visitors”³⁷. By October of that year, one-off art galleries along the street were celebrated in the press as indication of an urban renaissance, a sign of “something happening”³⁸. The Cultural Industry Information Office (CIIO) opened its doors to “throngs of artists, politicians, arts support workers, and anyone else” willing to celebrate the artistically driven Barton Street rejuvenation. The *Spectator* claimed, “the office will be the hub of a massive cultural initiative in Hamilton, encompassing the Barton Street arts village, Barton Street revitalization and a lending reservoir into which cultural workers can tap for live/work space and business start-up money.”³⁹ However, despite the CIIO and growing publicity in the local press, by September, the newly elected neoliberal provincial government, led by Mike Harris (Keil 2002), demanded Hamilton return provincial funds allocated by Bob Rae’s NDP Government for the Barton Street Artists Village. In Hamilton, this marked the beginning of a ‘Common-Sense’ era and the end of nineties inner city revitalization. Instead, funds were reallocated towards the development of the Red Hill expressway that would connect the Queen Elizabeth Parkway to suburban communities on Hamilton Mountain⁴⁰.

Over the next decade, Hamilton’s low-end service economy would ostensibly continue grow, most predominately evident along the urban periphery. The transition in Hamilton was dramatic. By “2003, there were 22,000 fewer people employed in manufacturing in the Hamilton-Burlington-Grimsby census metropolitan area than in

³⁷ “Barton St. art village plan not just empty bribe,” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 22, 1994.

³⁸ Ross Longbottom, “Art’s taking shape on Barton Street,” *Hamilton Spectator*, October 3, 1994.

³⁹ Jeff Mahoney, “Command post opens for arts initiative,” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 13, 1995.

⁴⁰ Dan Nolan, “Barton project offered little hope: Arts group may keep \$1.1 million, but rest likely cut,” *Hamilton Spectator*, September 25, 1995.

Sharon Boase, “Province wants Barton St. seed money sent back; Paint job won’t be enough to revive the area: Alderman,” *Hamilton Spectator*, September 30, 1995.

Paul Wilson, “Requiem for Barton Street: Pongetti moving to Mountain,” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 31, 1997.

John Burman, “Barton Streets blooms anew; Recent improvements along Barton Street have merchants optimistic for the future in an area once rife with closed shops,” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 14, 1998.

1989, in the same period, [; yet] employment in the services sector jumped by 65,000 jobs”⁴¹. Today, Hamilton is home to six Wal-Marts, one within the urban core, two more anchored in the east around neighboring Burlington, and one more proposed west of the city in the small, formerly rural community of Winona. Changes to Hamilton’s economic landscape were mostly targeted in spaces beyond urban periphery. Any hope of attracting Toronto’s white-collar jobs to Hamilton’s core dissipated with another failed remediation effort. As a result, Hamilton’s image as a dangerous, gritty and decaying downtown, continued to grow. By the 2000’s, Ontario’s provincial government would seek to remediate these perceptions in attempt to capitalize on the downtown landscapes of first, second and third tier cities geographically located in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area.

4.7. 2005-2015: Ontario’s “Places to Grow”

In 2005, the Ontario government unveiled a province-wide planning policy focussing on the development and revitalization of urban spaces. The goal: turn Ontario city centres into new knowledge economy hubs by attracting international capital, developing new infrastructure and reinvesting in the built environment (Keil 2002, 595-596). According to Ontario’s provincial mandate, the “Greater Golden Horseshoe is one of the most important regions in Canada – economically and culturally. With Toronto at its centre, this region stretches around Lake Ontario from Niagara Falls to Peterborough” (Places to Grow, 2005). According to the plan, revitalized downtowns should be vibrant, attractive and convenient urban centers that provide diverse opportunities for “living, working, learning, shopping and playing” (Places to Grow, 2005)

⁴¹ Meredith MacLeod, “City leading shift to service jobs,” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 27, 2005.

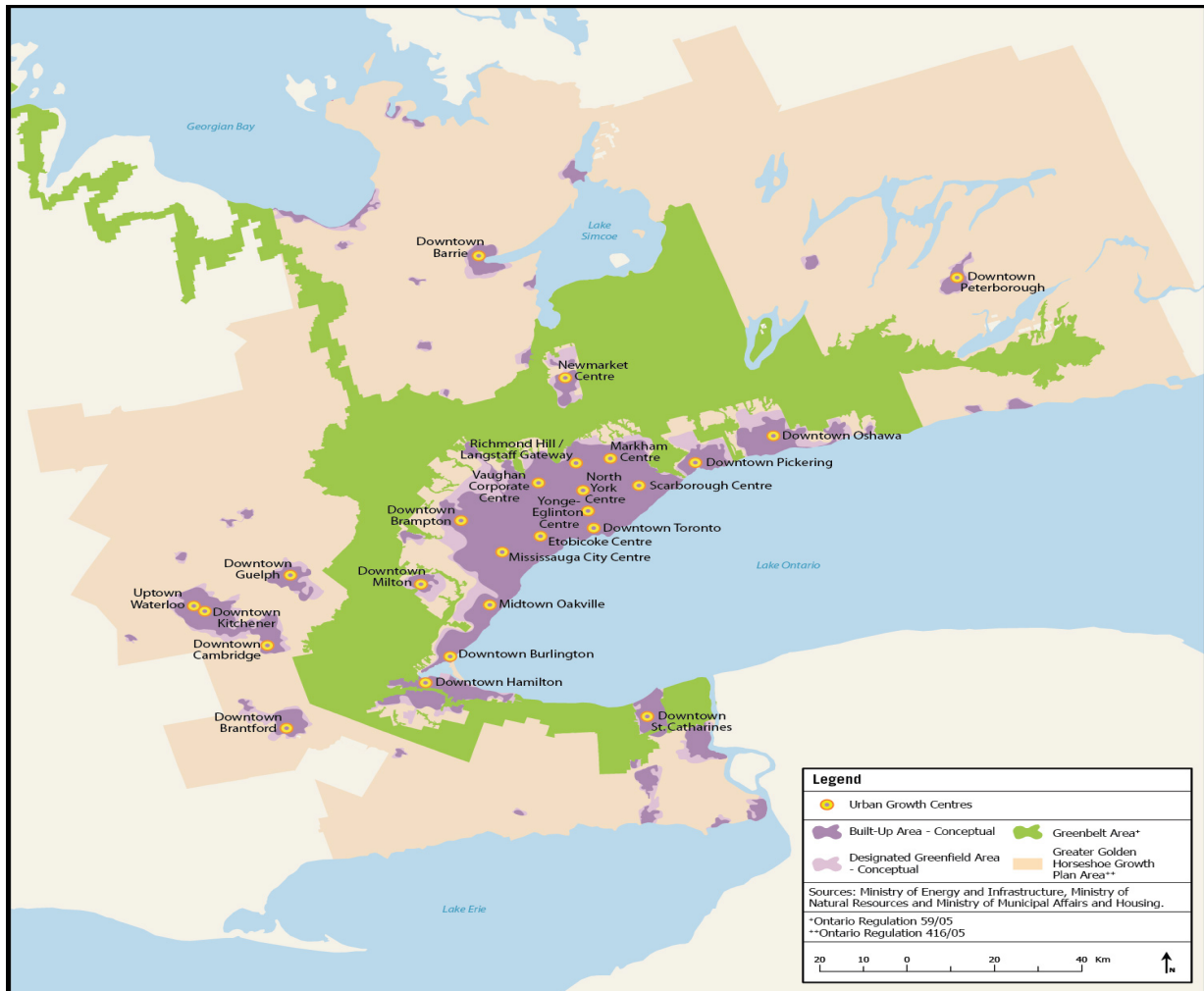


Figure 2: Hamilton within the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Places to Grow Act, 2005)

4.8. Places to Grow Hamilton

In Hamilton, the ‘Places to Grow’ plan, coinciding with the popularity of Richard Florida, triggered a ‘creative city impulse’ that mobilized urban managers, city boosters and political elite to develop planning policies complicit with the principles of both the plan, and Florida’s theory. Since 2002, the City of Hamilton drafted a series of studies, policies and planning documents emphasizing the need to integrate Hamilton into the rejuvenating creative and cultural economy. A year prior to Ontario’s ‘Places to Grow’

urban policy, Hamilton developed 2004's *Downtown Secondary Master Plan: Putting People First*, followed in 2010 by the *City of Hamilton Economic Development Strategy 2010-2015*. The *Putting People First* plan emphasized that key economic generators such as culture and vibrancy would revitalize the city and create an urban environment that is a safe and healthy place to "live, work and play".⁴² Throughout the document a consistent use of creative city buzzwords from Florida's work appear, as demonstrated in the declared vision statement of the document which states,

Downtown Hamilton of the future will be a *vibrant* focus of attraction where all our *diverse people can live, work and play*. The future *Downtown* must be built on a *human scale*, with streetscapes offering *comfort, access and safety for pedestrians*. The future *Downtown* will combine the best of our heritage with new commercial and domestic architecture and use. The future of *Downtown* will redirect our gaze from the urban core to the surrounding neighborhoods, the waterfront, and the escarpment, seamlessly linking commerce, housing and recreation⁴³

This statement, with its use of *vibrant, diverse, live, work, play, comfort, access, human scale, safety* and *pedestrians*, reveals Hamilton's urban commitment to Florida's general hypothesis. In order to substantiate the directives described in the plan while emphasizing creative attributes already found in Hamilton, the City devoted a \$100,000 to the *Our Community Project* report designed to map all of Hamilton's cultural resources through data made available by Statistics Canada, Yellow Page listings, municipal databases, and heritage inventories. Hamilton's 'cultural mapping' project found 870 creative industries, 180 community cultural organizations, 260 spaces and facilities, 824 cultural heritage sites, 28 natural heritage sites, and 92 festivals and events within the City that were deemed representative of Hamilton's local culture. Hamilton was creative, just by accident. In response to the study, Patti Tombs, culture division project manager, claims

⁴² Hamilton Economic Development, *Putting People First; The New Land Use Plan for Downtown Hamilton*, March 2004, http://www.investinhamilton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Downtown_Secondary_Plan_2004.pdf.

⁴³ Hamilton Economic Development, *Putting People First; The New Land Use Plan for Downtown Hamilton*, March 2004, http://www.investinhamilton.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Downtown_Secondary_Plan_2004.pdf.

in a piece to the *Spectator* that Hamilton is no longer just a steel town, or reliant on James North for culture. Instead, she argues that Hamilton's cultural inventory can be found throughout the city and beyond its urban periphery⁴⁴.

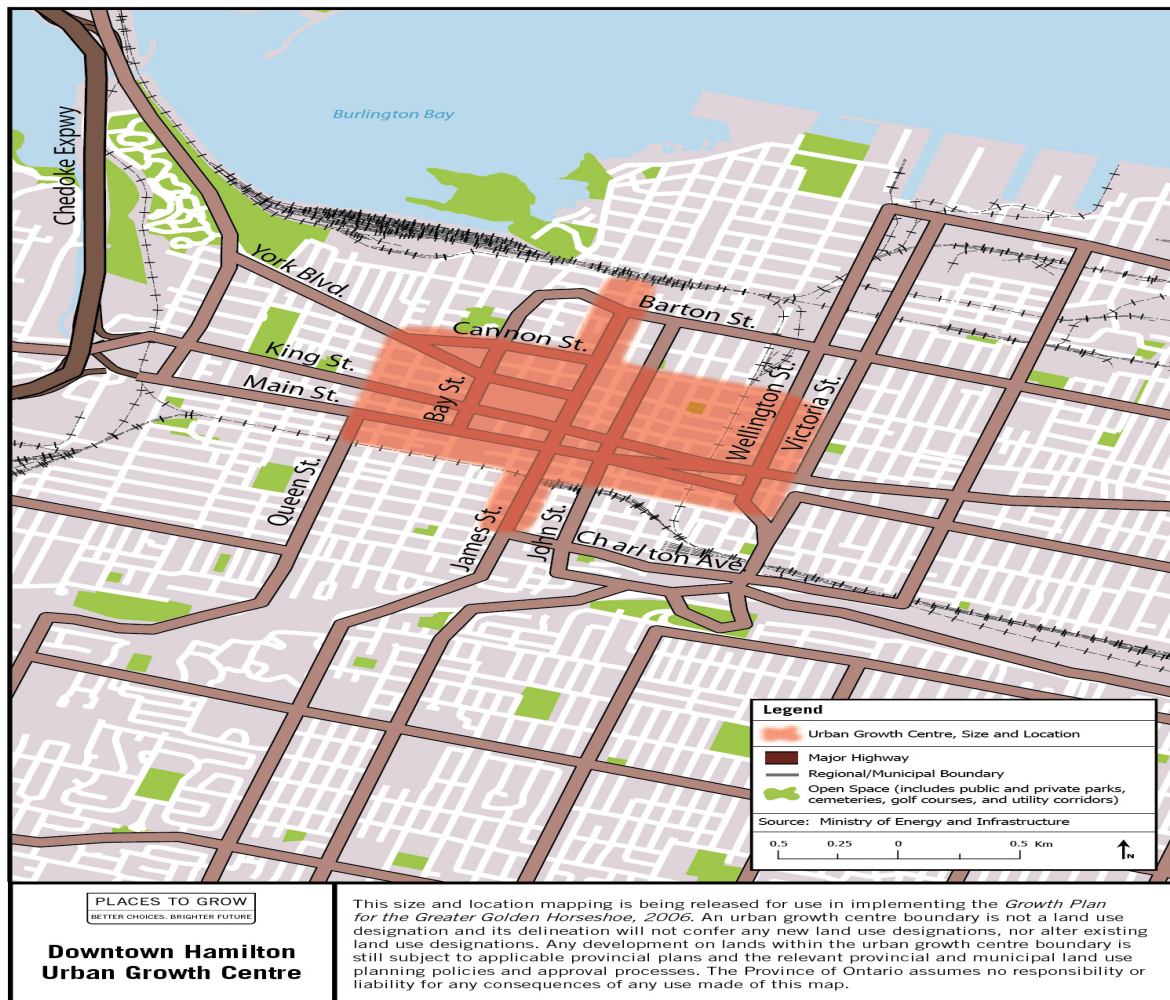


Figure 3: James Street North: Hamilton's Designated Growth Area (Places to Grow Act, 2005)

In order to harness the cultural potential of the city, Ali Sabourin, project manager of Hamilton's cultural inventory project and Jeremy Freiburger, creative director of the Imperial Cotton Centre for the Arts (now Cobalt Connects), suggest to the *Spectator* that

⁴⁴ Carmela Fragomeni, "Hard to define but culture is crucial to city; Culture as important as economic development to city's revival," *Hamilton Spectator*, January 8, 2011.

a local cultural plan is a key document, on par with the economic development policy⁴⁵. By 2013, the City's official culture plan, "*Transforming Hamilton through Culture*"(2013), was published to account for and expand upon local cultural attributes.

Developed from the *Love Your City* roundtable sessions chaired by Frieburger, Hamilton culture was defined as "festivals and events, a thriving arts scene, stories and customs, a sense of history, cool architecture, creative talent, public art, and even outdoor places like parks, farms and waterfalls⁴⁶". Hamilton's cultural plan also proposes three possible narratives that convey the *right* message for the City. Firstly, Hamilton is a desirable, vibrant city that encourages a connection between inhabitants and the city at a range of scales, resulting in attraction and retention of a desirable public. Secondly, the City's heritage extends beyond infrastructure and any preservation of the city's past will help contribute to localized place making, and lastly, Hamilton is a real city, full of excitement, vibrancy and grit⁴⁷. Despite implying a distinct difference between the three narratives, all three coalesce into an encompassing vision of Hamilton culture, theoretically reimagining the City as a unique destination providing individuals with an opportunity to live, work or play, "for a day, a weekend, or a lifetime of discovery⁴⁸". Perhaps most telling of Hamilton's contrived culture shift is the rewriting of Hamilton's official slogan, from 2002's 'Reach, Dream, Rise, Shine' to the more contemporary and unofficial 'Art is the New Steel'.

⁴⁵ Carmela Fragomeni, "Hard to define but culture is crucial to city; Culture as important as economic development to city's revival," *Hamilton Spectator*, January 8, 2011.

⁴⁶ City of Hamilton, "Love Your City: Cultural Policy & Plan," *Strategies & Actions*, "City Initiatives", accessed January 14, 2014, http://www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/strategies-actions/love-your-city-cultural-policy-plan?WT.mc_id=loveyourcity&WT.hamilton_redirect_friendly=1

⁴⁷ City of Hamilton, "Love your City Cultural Policy and Plan; Transforming Hamilton Through Culture," October 16, 2013, p.16, <http://www.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/86C5B200-3D1A-4C66-B5DF-DD7FE2E5EDEF/0/Oct1671PED12117a.pdf>.

⁴⁸ City of Hamilton, "Love your City Cultural Policy and Plan; Transforming Hamilton Through Culture," October 16, 2013, p.25, <http://www.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/86C5B200-3D1A-4C66-B5DF-DD7FE2E5EDEF/0/Oct1671PED12117a.pdf>.

Chapter 5: Creating the Urban Problem

5.0. Hamilton's Urban Grit

A thorough reading of newspaper reports from 1960 to 2014 shows a repetitive production and reproduction of discourses regarding urban degradation and urban renewal. Over the course of fifty years these discourses have experienced varied periods of dominant exposure. For the most part, discursive dominance correlated with emerging proposals for municipal planning initiatives contrived by vested business groups, urban managers and the political elite (v. Logan & Molotch, 1983). The existence of both discourses invites a deeper analysis of their relationship. Specifically, as will be demonstrated, discourses of degradation are usually succeeded by discourses of renewal. The following chapter will highlight this relationship, but more importantly, demonstrate how the local media creates the ‘problem’ of urban renewal in order to validate the urban solution (v. Shortell 2011). As early as the mid-sixties, people in Hamilton began to feel the rippling effects of globalization. As a large portion of the population migrated to the newly built suburban communities, the lower city in particular felt the brunt of these global restructuring processes. Places like Gore Park, James Street North and Barton Street Village, described as places of “sadness and hope,”⁴⁹ became physical testaments to the changing socio-economic conditions impacting Hamilton’s inner city. As will be demonstrated, this binary of ‘sadness’ (urban dirt) and ‘hope’ (urban renewal) was a necessary discursive method.

⁴⁹ “A Place of Sadness – and Hope” *Hamilton Spectator*, July 30, 1966

5.1. Constructed Truths: Wino's, Bums and the Urban Renaissance 1980-2000

Traditionally, street people and 'smut'⁵⁰ embody Hamilton's degenerative core⁵¹. The former in particular, described as 'winos, derelicts and drunks', are portrayed in the local press as major obstacles to urban revitalization⁵². Their sheer presence in an urban space has been enough to warrant fear and total abandonment of urban sites. In one particular instance, the presence of 'undesirables' caused enough derision amongst city councillors that any suggestions to remediate the Gore Park fountain were refuted by suggestions that "winos" would turn it into a urinal.⁵³ Perhaps coincidentally, this accusation came only weeks after council voted to close down the Gore Park washrooms permanently. The *Spectator* reported that this decision was due to rising costs, vandalism and perverts loitering around the area⁵⁴. The assumption that loitering vagrants were cause and effect of urban degradation persisted as the dominant discourse. Their presence on city streets and in public spaces helped craft a negative reputation of inner city neighbourhoods. Places like James Street North and Barton were considered 'rough' and 'dangerous'. In the case of the latter, "one of the toughest streets in Canada."⁵⁵ The *Spectator* rationalized that this was the "gritty reality of a steel-town street" and 'shabby image'. Sentiments confirmed by inner city blocks of vacant buildings, closed up stores, gangs on street corners and dirty streets⁵⁶. One local resident explained Barton Street and

⁵⁰ Helen Manning, "The problem downtown is the smut merchants" *Hamilton Spectator*, July, 12 1997

⁵¹ "Ed's upset by the sights in Gore Park" *Hamilton Spectator*, May 9, 1980

⁵² Ed's upset by the sights in Gore Park" *Hamilton Spectator*, May 9, 1980

⁵³ Bill Johnston, "New heights at Gore Park: 15-inch fountain described as a "urinal for winos", *Hamilton Spectator*, April 13, 1984

⁵⁴ Michael Davie, "Toilets are gone but it's a go for Gore construction" *Hamilton Spectator*, May 30, 1984

⁵⁵ "Neighborhood criticism annoys some residents" *Hamilton Spectator* June 17, 1982

"Dust gathers on Dominic's Italian Shoes" *Hamilton Spectator* Dec 30, 1985

⁵⁶ Jane Coutts, "Businessmen want to lose image filmmakers hunted for" *Hamilton Spectator* Oct 9, 1986

surrounding neighbourhoods possessed a sinister atmosphere,”⁵⁷ one emphasized by its representation as a “new kind of ghetto,” home to the “winos, the hookers, the street people”⁵⁸. By the end of the eighties, Hamilton’s inner city had lost large segments of its population and tax base. Migration outside the urban boundary and convenient retail opportunities in suburban communities decimated the downtown service industry.

Stumbling into the nineties, Hamilton’s core remained largely ignored. Local boosters, public officials and financial investors mostly balked at inner city remediation. Instead priorities were shifted towards the suburban expansion of Stoney Creek, Hamilton Mountain, Dundas and Ancaster (Freeman, 2001). Reflecting on the downtown, one *Spectator* article makes clear the impact of suburban flight: “downtown Hamilton is dark and not very inviting at 9 p.m....Perhaps 50 people meander through the core on one of the first decent Friday evenings of the year – but the ones in suits cleared out by 6. Most beeline for home in the suburbs or other parts of the city.”⁵⁹ The reporter uses words like “poor”, “dingy”, “sterile”, “dark” and “uncomfortable”⁶⁰ to describe the downtown, descriptive terms substantiated by accompanying reports of rising crime in Hamilton⁶¹ and Ontario⁶². By the mid-nineties, in an effort to quell local crime⁶³ and simultaneously ‘clean up the core’ a series of municipal initiatives, such as panhandling by-laws and removal of street furniture, were put into effect. According to one official of

⁵⁷ Brian Christman, “Merchants grapple with Barton St.” *Hamilton Spectator*, Oct 10, 1986

⁵⁸ “Dust gathers on Dominic’s Italian Shoes” *Hamilton Spectator* Dec 30, 1985

⁵⁹ Jim Poling, “Times are tough in the downtown core” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 18, 1994

⁶⁰ Jim Poling, “Times are tough in the downtown core” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 18, 1994

⁶¹ Jim Holt, Ontario’s break-in epidemic out of control, cops say”, *Hamilton Spectator* February 24, 1990

“How to beat the burglar, *Hamilton Spectator*, February 24, 1990

“They call it B & Easy,” *Hamilton Spectator*, February 24, 1990

⁶² Rick Hughes, “Crime stats show region’s not quite as safe as it was 15 years ago” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 12, 1990

⁶³ Nancy DeHart & Michael Allan Marion, “James N. crackdown praised” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 25, 1993

the Downtown BIA, the aim of the City was simple; it wanted “to get rid of the bums and the women who wash their clothes in the fountain⁶⁴”. For the rest of the nineties sentiments regarding downtown renewal were apparent: “clear out the panhandlers and delinquents...so that the city leaves a good impression on any tourist or visitor – not just a dirty taste in their mouths. Clean it up, and start to enforce some of the laws in the downtown area”⁶⁵. This emerging discourse would eventually manifest itself into public policy with a municipal by-law seeking to ban “three or more people from standing on the sidewalk or street in such a way to obstruct pedestrian traffic”. When questioned by the *Spectator*, one individual explained such a measure was “typical of Hamilton’s ragged core,” and a necessary step to ensure that tourists are able to experience more of the city than just torn-up roads, closed stores and panhandlers”⁶⁶.

Throughout the seventies, eighties and nineties, solutions to urban remediation involved grandiose planning initiatives that would reimagine and reconstruct the downtown core. In the media, before, during and after “The Civic Square Project” [1970s], “Central Area Plan” [1980s] and “Downtown Action Plan” [1990s], series of articles would be devoted to Hamilton’s inner city potential. Downtown residents would be [sic] “talkin’ proud”⁶⁷ after learning their unwavering faith in the inner city⁶⁸ would periodically get a ‘boost’⁶⁹. Article titles like, “Ideas to tomorrow: Saving Downtown – The Heart of Hamilton”⁷⁰ would be the norm prior to the announcement of urban renewal programs, a practice maintained well into the 2000’s.

⁶⁴ Paul Wilson, “Bench brush-off leaves downtown sidewalks naked,” *Hamilton Spectator*, July 8, 1993

⁶⁵ Robert Stevens, “Clean up downtown” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 20, 1997

⁶⁶ John Mentek, “White-faced Goths see red over bylaw” *Hamilton Spectator*, June 27, 1997

⁶⁷ Barton Street talkin’ proud, *Hamilton Spectator*, June 22, 1989

⁶⁸ Sharon Lebrun, “Festival shows there’s still life in Barton St.” *Hamilton Spectator*, June 26, 1995

⁶⁹ Jane Coutts, “James St. plan to get boost?,” *Hamilton Spectator*, February 10, 1987

⁷⁰ Paul Mitchell, “Ideas to Tomorrow” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 23, 1995

5.2. Constructed Truth: Grime, Vice, Panhandlers and Buskers - 2000's

As the newly amalgamated City of Hamilton, local council consolidated responsibility of downtown renewal to one urban revival task force. Formerly led by planning director Ron Marini, it was decided that revitalization of the core required a shift in perception and image⁷¹. On James Street North, this required local council to address the “unsavory characters”, social agencies and high crime rate intimately associated with the street⁷². According to one local reporter, this was “a losing battle against the drug dealers, hookers and users who have descended like blowflies on the once-thriving strip”⁷³. In conjunction with the ‘street’ people, urban commenters also suggested that the built environment, or ‘dead buildings’, had a direct impact on the perception of the core. Steve McNamee, a contributor to the *Spectator* whom incorrectly cited Jane Jacobs as the source for the ‘broken window theory,’ explains: “when buildings are abandoned and allowed to decay it “brings down” the whole area and tends to encourage further decay and crime”⁷⁴. As such, abandoned buildings, vacant storefronts, dilapidated inner city homes and places of vice, such as adult peep shows and “large sign flashing ‘girls, girls, girls’” serve as reflections of Hamilton’s degradation and ‘sleaze’⁷⁵.

As public attitudes towards the downtown and its inhabitants (both public and private) began to change, the City of Hamilton began to identify new solutions. Starting in 2002, the City of Hamilton embarked on a task to once again rid the urban core of vice

⁷¹ Paul Legall, “Merchants of Jamesville tough it out” *Hamilton Spectator*, Aug. 24, 2004

⁷² Paul Legall, “Merchants of Jamesville tough it out” *Hamilton Spectator*, Aug. 24, 2004

⁷³ Bill Dunphy, “Drug problem plagues James North” *Hamilton Spectator*, February 08, 2005

⁷⁴ Steve McNamee, “Bring ‘dead’ buildings to life”, *Hamilton Spectator*, February 14, 2005

⁷⁵ Helen Manning, “The problem downtown is the smut merchants” *Hamilton Spectator*, July, 12 1997

– and disrepute. One of the first public reports found in the *Spectator* was a proposal to prohibit the adult entertainment parlors described above. Quoting former councilor Andrea Horwath, the *Spectator* reports, “it has been done in other municipalities and the courts have upheld the right of those municipalities to control the kind of atmosphere they want to promote in their downtowns.”⁷⁶ Horwath contest that since the City has spent considerable monies to encourage private interests to invest in the renewal zone, Hamilton must “clean up its image if downtown revitalization is to succeed”. She felt it was imperative to the success of downtown that pedestrians and families feel “comfortable strolling downtown sidewalks, and strip clubs just don’t fit with that vision”. By 2008, the Maxim Strip Club across from Gore Park was purchased by the City with the intention to provide subsidized housing, including an option for subsidized units for artists.⁷⁷

Prior to closure of the strip club, Kathy Drewitt, a local booster and head of the Downtown Business Improvement Area, declared that the de facto micro-governing body of local merchants were fully committed to putting the “the wow back in downtown,”⁷⁸. Adhering to directives presented by a variety of municipally funded studies and planning documents, nine locally affiliated BIA’s have spearheaded the downtown remediation efforts. Gore Park in particular has been a major recipient of this attention. The City invested considerably in a solution for the Gore. Through public participation and municipal delegations, the official consensus, published in the *Spectator*, suggested success in the Gore was only possible by accommodating vendors, creating entertainment

⁷⁶ Barbara Brown, “Banish strip clubs in core: Horwath; Councilor says city has right to clean up downtown,” *Hamilton Spectator*, September 24, 2002, sec. News A11

⁷⁷ Nicole Macintyre, “City buys strip club; Plans to turn Maxim’s into public housing,” *Hamilton Spectator*, November 25, 2008, sec. Regional News A01

⁷⁸ Eric McGuinness, “BIA wants ‘wow’ back in Gore Park,” *Hamilton Spectator*, December 20, 2004.

spaces, building a veterans memorial, policing loitering and fostering a friendlier climate⁷⁹. The City had already taken steps to ensure undesirable activity would be remediated through a rise in park space rental, CCTV, and an increased police presence via downtown ACTION teams, a team of officers deployed throughout inner city on either foot or bicycle patrol⁸⁰. The official goal was to create a public space accessible to ‘all’ by offering a variety of amenities in a controlled, safe environment’. In a 2009 inquiry, the *Spectator* asked readers how they envisioned a new Gore Park, what they imaged could improve the space. True to the creative city discourse driving reform in Hamilton, the *Spectator* published the following:

How to improve the Gore Park area? Make it ‘mine’ in the same way that I consider other parts of the city mine...We have effectively ceded the park and surrounding area to patrons of discount stores, beer taverns, tattoo parlors, a bingo parlor, fast-food joints and peep shows - and of course, to the seedy souls who make the park virtually their second home anyway...My Gore Park area would include a bookstore, a music store selling classics and jazz, a museum, a sporting goods - running store, a theatre, cafes and high-end restaurants - and perhaps a few decent clothing stores for other members of my family. It would be a forum for occasional music festivals, art shows, and specialty displays, a photomontage of historical Hamilton. It would be the kind of place I would be proud to show visitors from out of town⁸¹

The need to reclaim the park from the ‘seedy souls’ and disreputable businesses suggests an assumed proprietary over the space, a bourgeois right to the city.

Expunging vice in the downtown, particularly Gore Park, required the removal of any and all impediments to Hamilton’s planning vision. Keeping the streets ‘open’ for pedestrians and families required more than simply eliminating ‘shady’ businesses and their patrons. In 2009, former Mayor and councilman Bob Bratina expressed such sentiments, explaining in the *Spectator* that the City has “to do something with the peep

⁷⁹ Dana Brown, “The gussying up of Gore Park: Hamilton is studying ways to make the area more pedestrian friendly,” *Hamilton Spectator*, October 3, 2008.

⁸⁰ Elisabeth Johns, “No Mercy for park sermons: Preachers balk at fee increases,” *Hamilton Spectator*, October 4, 2008.

⁸¹ Andrew Vowles, “To change Gore, change the area,” *Hamilton Spectator*, September 8, 2009.

show, bingo parlor and thrift store,” while also dealing with “the people who have taken control of the downtown by squatters rights. They’re an [sic] undefinable group, not *winos*, not *bums*, but it’s daunting for other people who go down there”. Bratina concluded his observation claiming “attitude surveys show people still think the core is unclean and unsafe, and until we change that perception we won’t have succeeded.”⁸² Lawyer Tim Bullock and former chair of the Downtown Business Improvement Area echoed Bratina’s beliefs in the *Spectator* a few days later. He argued panhandlers in the areas around Hamilton Place, Art Gallery of Hamilton and Copps Coliseum were a big reason for the City failing to attract conventions to the city, and responsible for creating an undesirable experience for Hamiltonians.⁸³

Truth-claims suggesting the individuals and activities of disrepute found in the core are mostly responsible for Hamilton’s urban problems convey a different reality, one devoid of the neoliberal socio-economic implications. By 2014, ‘desirable’ urban experiences would be defined by the visual and physical absence of loitering, spitting, profanity, garbage picking and other nuisance behavior on city streets.⁸⁴ In its place, an urban landscape based upon authenticated consumer-based experiences. The following chapter will demonstrate how this narrative changed and the persistent hope of city boosters has become reinvigorated.

⁸² Nicole Macintyre, “City buys strip club; Plans to turn Maxim’s into public housing,” *Hamilton Spectator*, November 25, 2008, sec. Regional News A01.

⁸³ Sara Mayo and Peter Graefe, “All welcome in downtown core; What’s the problem with people using Gore Park?” *Hamilton Spectator*, November 23, 2009, sec. Opinion and Editorial A15.

⁸⁴ Samantha Craggs, “City wants to stop downtown loitering, spitting and other ‘nuisance behavior’; Barrie bylaw prohibits busking, profanity and picking through garbage,” CBC News, July 04, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/city-wants-to-stop-downtown-loitering-spitting-and-other-nuisance-behaviour-1.2695805>.

Chapter 6: Creative Hamilton

6.0. Art is the New Steel

As described in previous chapters, attempts at culture-oriented urban renewal did very little to improve Hamilton's socio-economic condition (Freeman 2001). Despite this, Hamilton's contemporary planning principles share most of the same attitudes and initiatives as those found in the Civic Square Project" [1970s], "Central Area Plan"[1980s] and "Downtown Action Plan" [1990s]. However, unlike the traditional urban modernization programs predicated on the razing and rebuilding of city blocks (v. Berman, 1988; Melvill 1983; Freeman 2001), Richard Florida's work encourages urban managers to embrace the heritage, grit and authenticity of place; urban characteristics outlined in the 'creative city index' (Florida 2002, v. Zukin 1989; 1995; 2010). Many of his founding principles can be identified in Ontario's "Places to Grow" urban policy and Hamilton planning initiatives (Putting People First, 2004; Love Your City Cultural Policy Plan, 2013; Hamilton Economic Development 2010-2015) that inform local planning practices on the ground. However, more importantly, at least in the context of this thesis, are the presence of these principles as they are found in the local discourses and truth claims produced and reproduced in the press. This chapter will explore the social attitudes and perceptions of downtown have changed. Specifically, how the urban truth of grit and danger is now recognized as desirable characteristics.

In the contemporary context, the local media (*Hamilton Spectator* & *CBC Hamilton*) have played an integral role in recreating and reimagining local 'truths'. In the Floridian-planning era, the deindustrialized city is celebrated as an authentically organic,

cultural ‘hotbed’ poised to become ‘the new cool’.⁸⁵ Since 2002, the *Spectator* and more recently *CBC Hamilton*, have maintained the tradition emphasizing Hamilton’s inner city potential and impending urban renewal. However, in the latest replication, it has incorporated a sub-set of ‘truth-makers’ to justify these claims. Bloggers and independent media sources, operated by individuals whom Florida would describe as creative class, are integrated into the production and reproduction of local truth claims. By providing exposure to the various local websites, blogs and social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), the ‘official’ (*Hamilton Spectator*) and ‘independent’ (Beaux Mondes, Cut From Steel, I Heart Hamilton) sources of information have produced and reproduced a broad narrative that emphasizes authenticity as a marketable characteristic of the ‘good life’ (Zukin 2009). More importantly, these localized discourses validate local and provincial planning principles while maintaining an ethos of commoditized ‘cool’ (v. Zukin 2010).

6.1. Institutions of Hamilton’s Creative City Revival

In 2004, *The Centre for Community Study*, a local Hamilton think-tank, adopted Richard Florida’s creative city index (v. Florida 2005) as a means to measure Hamilton’s creative city potential. It was determined that Hamilton required considerable investment and focus in local culture and arts to ensure economic validity. A conclusion echoed by the blatant *Spectator* headline, “Vibrant cultural sector attracts ‘creative class’⁸⁶. In 2007, in an effort to guide Hamilton’s economic growth, job creation and local revitalization, the City established the *Hamilton Economic Development Office* (HED). A product of Hamilton municipality and local chamber of commerce, the HED is integral to the

⁸⁵ Scott Summerhayes, “The new cool; Changing demographics of the core,” *Urbanicity*, November 13, 2014, <http://urbanicity.ca/2014/11/the-new-cool-changing-demographics-of-the-core/>.

⁸⁶ Jon Wells, “Vibrant cultural sector attracts ‘creative class,” *Hamilton Spectator*, October 25, 2004, sec. A1

knowledge and truth claims pertaining to Hamilton's creative city renaissance. The role and purpose of the HED is broad. From compiling research and data to developing and informing municipal programs, the HED's consummate goal is to lure investment towards Hamilton. In the local press, specifically the *Hamilton Spectator*, the HED informs the *HamiltonBusiness.Com: A Creative Exchange* and revamped *Hamilton Business* sections of the paper. These business-oriented sections of the paper highlight Hamilton's young professionals, creative workspaces, and trendy service-based industries. For its efforts, the HED has been nominated for three Marketing Canada Awards and (2012) and in 2014, *Site Selection*, a corporate real estate strategy and economic development magazine chose the HED as one of the top economic development groups in Canada⁸⁷. Through a variety of mediums and platforms, the HED has marketed Hamilton as a cultural hub, creating and disseminating 'local' truths that perceptively give Hamilton "its 'mojo back.'"⁸⁸

Along with marketing the City as a vibrant, investable community, the HED is also responsible for the *Hamilton Hive*, a business oriented network involved with weekly, monthly and yearly events like the 'McMaster University Employment Crawl,'⁸⁹ *Hive X Conference*⁹⁰ and *Hamilton Economic Summit*⁹¹. The latter in particular has grown exponentially since its inaugural year. In that first year (2008), one hundred and twenty-five civic leaders gathered to hear Richard Florida's lecture at Hamilton's inaugural

⁸⁷ "U.S. magazine honors Hamilton Economic Development Team; Atlanta, Georgia's Site Selection Magazine recognized ten Canadian economic development teams," CBC News, September 9, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/u-s-magazine-honours-hamilton-economic-development-team-1.2760480>.

⁸⁸ Meredith MacLeod, "Video: Hamilton gets its mojo back," *Hamilton Spectator*, October 22

⁸⁹ Fred Vallance-Jones, "Young head for the hills," *Hamilton Spectator*, September 22, 2002, sec. A3.

Ron Marini, "Let's keep young talent right here in Hamilton," *Hamilton Spectator*, June 11, 2008, sec. opinion & editorial A16.

⁹⁰ Hamilton Economic Development, "Top Ten Reasons It's Time...to invest in Hamilton," *Invest in Hamilton*, accessed October 6, 2014, <http://www.investinhamilton.ca/why-hamilton/top-ten-reasons/>

⁹¹ "Economic Summit: Creative conversation," *Hamilton Spectator*, May 11, 2012.

economic summit. The event, held at a lavish restaurant outside the urban periphery, focused on the inner city's potential for creative city development. According to the *Spectator*, Florida highlighted Hamilton's pre-existing creative city attributes and stressed that Hamilton, "in the context of the greater Toronto explosion, has already turned a corner," and "can't help but be part of a boom". He concluded, "you can't really miss"⁹². Less than a year after his keynote speech, in an interview with the *Spectator*, Florida suggested that Hamilton must 'go creative' in order to generate jobs in the post-industrial landscape. Hamilton's entertainment sector would soon overtake both the automotive and steel industries⁹³. It is these specific truth-claims regarding Hamilton's creative city intent, as they exist in the local press, that the remainder of this chapter will analyze. In the press, Florida's personal guarantee not only confirmed Hamilton's capability for 'global greatness', but also reaffirmed that creativity and culture was the future of Hamilton. The *Hamilton Spectator* has provided considerable exposure and discursive support for creative city initiatives, programs and groups responsible for producing and reproducing the discourse. As a result, the *Spectator* and its affiliates have become the voice of a new Hamilton and the discursive vehicle of the City.

6.2. Turning Art into the New Steel

Shortly after the release of Florida's (2002) book, a series of articles exploring the potential benefits of creative city renewal began to appear in the *Hamilton Spectator*. Patti Cannon, former executive director of Hamilton and Region Arts Council, was one of the first local boosters to publish an opinion piece on Hamilton's creative class. She writes, in August of 2002: of Hamilton's "amazing array of talented people" who have

⁹² Meredith Macleod, "Hamilton poised for global greatness," *Hamilton Spectator*, May 2, 2008, sec. A01.

⁹³ Richard Ward Allen, "Culture and commerce meet at the Café," *Hamilton Spectator*, January 21, 2009, sec. Opinion & Editorial sec. A11.

Already chosen to live here and stay here. All that remains for Hamilton to become one of the great cities in North America is the recognition of this group and the promotion of Hamilton's arts community to the rest of the world...This arts community — your arts community — has been working diligently and persistently to be a major force of revitalization of the city. Perhaps now that The Hamilton Spectator has so clearly linked this recognition to the future growth and success of our city, people will start to pay more attention to our arts community...How do we retain these people and attract others? Every organization that is involved in rebuilding Hamilton for the 21st century must include these three principles in their plans. This includes City Hall, the Chamber of Commerce, downtown business improvement areas, Downtown Partnership, the media and every other group that reflects our city...There must be a community-wide buy in to the importance of the creative class in Hamilton if Hamilton is going to become one of the leading cities in North America...We have everything else we need in this city - - a scientific community, tolerance to diversity, a "gay friendly" community, a large creative community. All that remains is for the people of Hamilton to recognize it, support it and promote it⁹⁴

Cannon here reflects the HED's overarching narrative but also the role of the *Spectator* in the process. Over the course of the next decade, local interest groups, the City and independent boosters utilized the local media to produce and reproduce the creative city discourse in an effort to prove Hamilton could indeed transform itself into the next creative city⁹⁵. On the ground, James Street North is assuming the physical manifestation of Hamilton as a creative city: art galleries, cafés, niche-retail stores, restaurants and artistic festivals. In local shop windows, a variety of merchandise, from t-shirts to tote bags are decorated with the unofficial city slogan, "Art is the new Steel"⁹⁶



⁹⁴ Paul Berton, "Downtown Hamilton has bright future," *Hamilton Spectator*, August 07, 2012.

⁹⁵ Evelyn Myrie, "Go beyond Eurocentric expression," *Hamilton Spectator*, September 30, 2004, sec. F9.

⁹⁶ Mark McNeil, "Art in a transforming city; A healthy creative class has a role to play in the overall health of the community," *Hamilton Spectator*, October 4, 2011, sec. Regional SBA2.



Figure 4: "Art is the New Steel" Slogan and Screen Art

6.3. Authenticity

Perceived authenticity is integral to the success of creative city profitability (Zukin 2010). Predicated heavily on the visible presence of art and artists, creative city renewal, or state-led gentrification (Peck 2012; Whitt 1987), must be marketed as an organic process driven by the sweat equity and creativity of urban pioneers (Smith 1996). Zukin describes this as a “marriage of convenience between profit-oriented place entrepreneurs and culturally dominant new comers” (Zukin 2011, 162). It is through such relationship that the authenticity discourse is created as,

rhetoric and then a strategy of growth, shaping new zoning (and other) laws that ban chain stores, or mandate very small stores, or require preservation of ‘historic’ buildings, or forbid smokestacks and commercial fishing, all of which reinforces a specific kind of landscape that will likely attract more newcomers who share these tastes (Zukin 2011, 162).

Authenticity discourse is primarily “shaped by different kinds of social and cultural capital that greased the wheels of larger political and economic forces: the rise of lifestyle media and blogs; zoning changes, policing strategies and government subsidies; officials’, developers’ and investors’ interest in supporting new construction” (Zukin 2009, 546).

For the most part, ‘creative city authenticity’ is a by-product of Jane Jacobs’ “ballet

of the street” (Jacobs 1961). Jacob’s urban village and notions of authenticity are closely interrelated, and both share a rich history of social reflection (v. Zukin 2008, 728).

However, Jacobs’ idea of authenticity is in accordance to a specific era where working class neighborhoods, populated by small specialty shops and creative-artist driven spaces, places in which residents embody ‘la vie de boheme’, still existed (Zukin 2008, 729). As Zukin explains, this Jacobsian ideal has created a “language that embodies our desire for a good place to live,” one that,

Persuades us, or just confirms our belief, that the good life depends on building more boutiques, and restoring more old houses. These images of the urban good life camouflage a basic conflict. Dependent on both private developers to invest and build, and voters to keep them in office, officials will walk a fine line between promising support for housing rights that will help to preserve communities and redevelopment projects that will eliminate or change them. Their rhetoric of growth takes direction from market-oriented administrations in national government and the unanticipated success of gentrification. The new priority is ‘making markets’, as an entrepreneurial slogan says, rather than helping poor people and small businesses to stay in place, or permitting local communities to veto developers’ plan (Zukin 2009, 549)

Emphasis on ‘making markets’ through authenticity, an inherently neoliberal initiative, is only possible if the spaces being altered are compatible with the ‘newcomers’ ideas of a ‘good life’. James Street North is portrayed as the perfect balance between a suburbanite threshold for safety and the youthful craving of the unknown. At a greater scale, the street serves as the showpiece of ‘Creative Hamilton’.

The *Spectator* has been keen to magnify the local creative ethos by providing coverage and exposure to spaces in the core synonymous with Floridian chic. This varies from trendy new restaurants, coffee shops and niche retailers populated by individuals in “tight jeans, tweedy academics, entrepreneurs of all shapes and sizes, suits [and] city officials⁹⁷”. Unremitting reiteration of Hamilton’s re-imagined environment is integral to sustaining the image and marketability of Hamilton’s ‘urbane cool’ ethos. In the small

⁹⁷ “Agents of Change: Beaux Mondes,” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 07, 2012.

wake of artistic migration, keen pioneers of the urban frontier (v. Smith 1979) have invested in Hamilton's inner city landscape to create, maintain and sustain a neo-suburban narrative of perceived edgy, gritty and vibrant urbanity to the keep 'cool kids' in town.

In reality, these urban sites are in fact undergoing a deep cleanse, leaving only the artful patina of urban grit and authenticity. Old town structures, salvaged from Hamilton's 'golden era', are celebrated as representations of Hamilton's lasting heritage and cosmopolitan 'feel', while a proliferation of galleries, boutiques and eateries imply some sort of citywide economic renaissance. In either case, the transition lends nicely to the Floridian blueprint with what is best described as "suburban involution" or high-density, urban domesticity (Peck, Siemiatycki & Wyly 2014).

6.4. Authentic Hamilton

Local authenticity, history, culture and the backdrop of James Street North are imperatives to Hamilton's growth. Hamilton's inner city neighborhood in particular is portrayed as a bohemian arts district, un-gentrified and gritty, one deemed attractive for artists. In 2010, *The Spectator* emphasizes these characteristics, claiming that

Unlike Locke Street, James does not have higher-end neighborhoods surrounding it; it has a homeless shelter and is surrounded in part by the decidedly un-gentrified downtown core. Also, artists on James tend to own their own space, making it less likely that landlords can rent out their spaces to new big money tenants... So, No, James isn't quite on easy street yet and hardly approaching grit-free status. And while everyone wants a safer and family-friendly street 24/7, there is a sense that James can't, and shouldn't, have its tough reputation starched out entirely, even if it was possible⁹⁸

The gritty nature of the street, now deemed culturally desirable, is a casualty of the 'dangerous' narrative described in the *Spectator* throughout most of eighties and nineties.

⁹⁸ Jon Wells, "The rise and return of James North," *Hamilton Spectator*, October 29, 2010.

In the 2000s, the reimagined ‘grit’ is accompanied by confirmations of an artist lead renewal, which according to the *Spectator*, confirmed the early stages of an artistically driven urban renaissance⁹⁹.

By 2008, James Street North was intimately linked with a thriving local arts scene, and marketed as a historical and cultural representation of Hamilton’s creative city emergence. In 2010, the *Spectator* dedicated a section of the paper to highlighting James North’s rich history and diverse heritage. Titled, ‘*The Story of James*’¹⁰⁰, the fold described “the evolution of James Street, especially the northern portion” as a “microcosm of what has happened in Hamilton until now... a crystal ball depicting what the city could be in the future¹⁰¹”. With titles such as ‘*A street on the rebound*’, ‘*Here’s the thing about James Street North. It is absolutely one of a kind. No other city has one*’, ‘*A Street with a history*’ and ‘*A bold vision of downtown renewal*’, the James North project is fashioned to portray a street very much in line with the urban described in Florida’s creative class literature. One not acknowledged by gentrifiers on James Street, but rather one understood to be organic and authentic.

The assemblage of traditional brick buildings and storefronts, remnants of Hamilton’s ‘golden age’ and what has been called James North’s existing “eccentricities and architectural characteristics,¹⁰²” drive this idea that the James North gentrification is organic and authentic. According to the *Spectator*, the development of live/work spaces, with art galleries, cafes and local eateries at street-level and live-in studio spaces on

⁹⁹ Loren Lierberman, “What about James North?” *Hamilton Spectator*, February 10, 2005.

Anne Jones, “James Street – vital and viable,” *Hamilton Spectator*, August 29, 2005.

Rob Faulkner, “Artists drawn to James Street North,” *Hamilton Spectator*, September 16, 2005.

¹⁰⁰ Dana Brown, “Weekend Interview with Dave Kuruc,” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 5, 2008.

Mark McNeil, “The story of James; A street on the rebound,” *Hamilton Spectator*, October 30, 2010, sec. Regional News.

¹⁰¹ Howard Elliot, “Our yesterday, our tomorrow,” *Hamilton Spectator*, October 30, 2010 sec. Regional News.

¹⁰² Ross Longbottom, “Taxes are top issue in Jamesville,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 25, 2002.

second and third stories, is integral to this vision¹⁰³. Articles dedicated to the telling of affordable and trendy live/work spaces offering fine hardwood floors, high ceilings, original door casings and wide baseboards, a large open-concept kitchen, ensuite bathroom and “a set of double doors that open onto a patio in the sky¹⁰⁴,” commonly appear in the press. Furthermore, the urban pioneers responsible for recreating these spaces have also been given considerable exposure in the press, some achieving a celebrity-like status.

Dave Kuruc, entrepreneur, landowner, and unofficial leader of the James North revival is described in the *Spectator* as someone with “elements of Jane Jacobs and Richard Florida, but without the pseudo intellectual cocktail chatter.”¹⁰⁵ Kuruc has maintained a presence in the press – and a steady reassurance of the street’s organic and authentic development. As early as 2008, Kuruc suggests James North is “something Hamilton hasn’t seen before,” a “destination” and “experience” that will “evolve organically, very much like it has in the last four or five years.” Kuruc explains, “artists moved here initially because it was inexpensive to buy buildings,” an economic possibility which helped turn the street into a “real neighborhood.” “[A]lot of people talk about gentrification” he suggests, “and I think it’s the wrong word for what’s taking place on James Street¹⁰⁶”. Instead of gentrification, buzzwords such as ‘*organic*’, ‘*hip*’, and ‘*grit*’ are used in the press to help reimagine James North as an urban environment teeming with art and bohemian culture. As one 2010 *Spectator* piece claims:

Something transformative and organic (a favorite James word) has evolved, especially

¹⁰³ Rob Faulkner, “Artists drawn to James Street North,” *Hamilton Spectator*, September 16, 2005.

¹⁰⁴ Paul Wilson, “Downtown needs more folks like Gary; He says more people should live downtown, so he’s making his home there – literally,” *Hamilton Spectator*, October 31, 2007, sec. GO.

¹⁰⁵ Jeff Mahony, “New vision of city from James North: Mixed Media co-owner sees sustainability as key,” *Hamilton Spectator*, ‘February 25, 2009.

¹⁰⁶ Dana Brown, “Weekend Interview with Dave Kuruc,” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 05, 2008.

in the last six or seven years: multiple art galleries, hip shops and cafes, internationally flavored restaurants, new residents, and the hottest concert bar around (called This Ain't Hollywood, a name that, again, plays off James's reputation for grit). The monthly art crawl attracts hundreds of people but art is everywhere, not just in galleries but in the decor in general¹⁰⁷

The gradual proliferation of independent cafes, trendy restaurants, hip bars and condominium projects have helped to further substantiate this urban congeniality, maintaining a 'buzz' that turns places like James North into 'desirable destinations'. By 2010, local booster Jeremy Freiburger declared to the local press that James North had finally "crossed over the cusp, and is now solidly rooted in success, accomplishment and future potential"¹⁰⁸. A feat, which he suggests was accomplished without "government or public sector largess," but rather, "on the backs of the people who have always believed in its specialness, and were willing to invest their time, money and energy into seeing that potential made real"¹⁰⁹. The James North narrative is one that has been replicated in cities and neighbourhoods across North America (Peck 2012). In Hamilton, the momentum of James North has inspired similar truth-claims regarding the geographically attached Barton Street Village.

6.5. Barton: The New James North?

Long considered a derelict and dangerous neighbourhood, the newly dubbed Barton Street's Village is considered a potential site for Hamilton's newest revitalization efforts. Urban managers and local boosters believe the proposed Go-Train Station on James Street North and new football stadium precinct anchoring the street in the East will

¹⁰⁷ Graham Rockingham, "Super crawl: James Street North: Revel in our downtown's burgeoning arts district," *Hamilton Spectator*, September 23, 2010, sec. Arts and Entertainment GO 1.

¹⁰⁸ Jon Wells, "The Story of James: The rise and return of James North," *Hamilton Spectator*, October 29, 2010, sec. Regional News.

¹⁰⁹ Jon Wells, "The Story of James: The rise and return of James North," *Hamilton Spectator*, October 29, 2010, sec. Regional News.

serve as “catalysts” for the Barton Street regeneration initiative¹¹⁰. Not since 1995, has the street been acknowledged for its ‘good bones’ and ‘massive potential’.

In the summer of 2014, the *Spectator* ran a front-page article titled “Barton Rising” discussing a potential five-phase project that would ‘shake things up on Barton Street East’¹¹¹. Spearheaded by Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals of Hamilton (YEP), the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, City Hall and the Barton Village Business Improvement Area, the initiative seeks solutions for garbage clean up, graffiti removal, business workshops, a cash mob, and ‘pop-up’ shops in vacant storefronts.¹¹² Glen Norton, manager of urban renewal, argues that despite the ‘poor appearance of the street’, access to the North End waterfront neighbourhood and major industries make the street a piece of prime real estate.¹¹³

Similar to James North during the early years of its renaissance, Barton Street is described as a place with potential, rich cultural history and urban grit. In other words, Hamilton’s next ‘it’ spot.¹¹⁴ The *Spectator* describes Barton Street as the “core at its grittiest, which is to say it’s most real and unpredictable,” considered by the press as, “both a weakness and a strength”¹¹⁵. Barton’s grit is represented by the streets “broken buildings and broken people”, prostitutes and drug dealers that harass those not from the neighbourhood brave enough to walk on the street. However, in the Floridian context, it also means ‘engaging and unique businesses’ consisting of authentic sandwich shops, bakeries and restaurants...complimented by a diverse housing stock with original finishing, fireplaces and exposed brick walls, the latter being a staple of millennial

¹¹⁰ Steve Buist, “Tackling Barton’s troubles with a new stadium,” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 23, 2013

¹¹¹ Rachael Williams, “Rising up to the challenge of Barton Street,” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 1, 2014.

¹¹² Rachael Williams, “Rising up to the challenge of Barton Street,” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 1, 2014.

¹¹³ Rachael Williams, “Rising up to the challenge of Barton Street,” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 1, 2014.

¹¹⁴ Jon Wells, “Barton Street: Bound for glory or...?” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 25, 2013.

¹¹⁵ Jon Wells, “Barton Street: Bound for glory or...?” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 25, 2013.

taste¹¹⁶. There is a belief among boosters and urban managers that people, the right people, will eventually discover Barton Street. One long-term Barton Street resident claims “artists will come here. Barton can be the second James Street North. It will happen here if people think it will happen here.”¹¹⁷ Paul Shaker shares these sentiments, suggesting to the press that “the urban design of the street, the village feel, the built form, it’s got the bones,” and perhaps more importantly, “Barton continues to be seen as a gritty place to live, it may well attract artists, replacing James North as the place to be”¹¹⁸.

Described as the ‘last authentic neighbourhood in the city,’ advocates insist the neighbourhood has ‘good bones’. With local organizers and the Barton Village BIA hosting events like the ‘Barton Street Festival’ and ‘BARTCrawl,’ (a similar event to the James North ‘Art Crawl’), there is a belief on the street that Barton Street can become the next hip area of Hamilton¹¹⁹ (v. Zukin 2010). Furthermore, much like boosters on James North, patrons of Barton Street reaffirm “Barton will never become a gentrified...it will always be a bit more gritty, have a bit more reality to it. I think it could become more like the Junction, Queen East. But Barton is it’s own neighbourhood, it’s hard to compare to something in Toronto. Barton is more special. And it takes people who are a bit braver to move into the area and make it shine”¹²⁰. In August 2015, *CBC Hamilton* suggests, “The idea of a revitalized Barton Street seems to be finally taking root”¹²¹.

¹¹⁶ Jon Wells, “Barton Street: Bound for glory or...?” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 25, 2013.

¹¹⁷ Jon Wells, “Barton Street: Bound for glory or...?” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 25, 2013.

¹¹⁸ Jon Wells, “Barton Street: Bound for glory or...?” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 25, 2013.

¹¹⁹ Can Barton Street become the next hip area of Hamilton, CBC News, Aug, 25, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/can-barton-street-become-the-next-hip-area-of-hamilton-1.3202243>

¹²⁰ Jon Wells, “Barton Street: Bound for glory or...?” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 25, 2013.

¹²¹ Can Barton Street become the next hip area of Hamilton, CBC News, Aug, 25, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/can-barton-street-become-the-next-hip-area-of-hamilton-1.3202243>

Integral to ideas of revitalization is the successful sterilization of Barton's urban grit. Specifically, broken buildings and broken people. According to one local booster, "if you need a sex worker, you go to Barton Street. If you need some drugs, you go to Barton Street." For one local booster, "Its time to say that's not all Barton Street should be known for"¹²². Furthermore, the 'vacant storefronts and derelict buildings,' along the urban strip are believed to be considered "dangerously close" to the new stadium precinct¹²³. In line with the 'broken windows theory,' (Wilson & Kelling 1982) urban managers are reimagining and recreating Barton Street to help alter this local perception. Through a series of government grants, artists have begun the process of installing art installations in several vacant storefronts along the Barton Street corridor"¹²⁴. Despite the largesse provided by the local government, one local councillor insisted this initiative was grassroots, asserting that there is no "better way of displaying our renaissance as a city than through the work of our artists"¹²⁵.

Similar to James North, Barton Street is undergoing a state-led gentrification process that is reframed and promoted as an organic process. Through the appropriation of the local arts community, the City is able to maintain the marketable traits of urban grit while simultaneously ridding the area those deemed undesirable. This is the slow process of social exclusion through organic authentication. The remained of this chapter will demonstrate how the media uses independent sources of information to validate authentication, but also validate its success amongst active local members of the creative class.

¹²² Samantha Craggs, "Artists hope to dress up Barton Street for the Pan Am Games," CBC News, April 12, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/artists-hope-to-dress-up-barton-street-for-the-pan-am-games-1.3028914>.

¹²³ Samantha Craggs, "Artists hope to dress up Barton Street for the Pan Am Games," CBC News, April 12, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/artists-hope-to-dress-up-barton-street-for-the-pan-am-games-1.3028914>.

¹²⁴ Matthew Van Dongen, "Painting the town for Pan AM," *Hamilton Spectator*, April 15, 2015.

¹²⁵ Matthew Van Dongen, "Painting the town for Pan AM," *Hamilton Spectator*, April 15, 2015.

6.6. Supporting Local: Independent Sources of Discourse

Using distinctions and parameters described by Florida, Hamilton has taken stock of any pre-existing creative city attributes and assembled them into a hodge-podge of place branding for profit. Since first introduced by Patti Cannon, creative city logic has continued to evolve into an inherently economic discourse. More recently, local community leaders provide personal endorsements publicly reaffirming the cultural authenticity and organic development of the James North art district. In 2014, local independent magazine *Urbanicity* declared Hamilton's inner city was the embodiment of "*The New Cool*,¹²⁶" an ethos determined by the influx and success of urban festivals, rapid gentrification, heritage revitalization practices and a fervent real-estate market.



Figure 5: Online media content reproducing Hamilton's creative city discourse

Encouraged by the emergence of Hamilton's 'New Cool', an array of Hamilton-dedicated blogs, Facebook, twitter and instagram accounts have gained local popularity for their

¹²⁶ Scott Summerhayes, "The new cool; Changing demographics of the core," *Urbanicity*, November 13, 2014, <http://urbanicity.ca/2014/11/the-new-cool-changing-demographics-of-the-core/>.

commitment to Hamilton ‘scenes’ (@I Heart Hamilton¹²⁷), heritage architecture (@Rebuild Hamilton¹²⁸) and hip eateries (@TheRealCHANRY¹²⁹). Aside from the commitment to ‘retweeting’, ‘liking’ and ‘sharing’ each other’s content, all independent sources mentioned in this section are, to various degrees, affiliated with the dominant local press, active participants in HED-led events and promotional fodder for Hamilton-oriented merchandise (See Fig: 2).

Of these various online knowledge-producers, the first given considerable public exposure is *Beaux Mondes*. Celebrated for bringing an edgy-cosmopolitan flair to the steel city, the *Spectator* credited the blog for its ability to promote a sense of urban culture through a new social medium¹³⁰. When proprietors of the blog were asked for their view of the city, they mirrored the edgy creative aspirations of the city:

James Street North is like SoHo in the 1960’s and 1970’s. There’s this grandeur to the architecture, a distinct heritage that’s embraced, a vibrant arts scene, an emerging pride among the city’s residents (and) affordable properties. [There is] Some critique that James North is losing its edge that it’s bordering on gentrification but let’s not get ahead of ourselves¹³¹

A common practice amongst all these online curators is the use of a specific language and ideas. Terms like “edgy” or “gritty,” “authentic” and “organic” are used when referring to Hamilton’s urban environment. These sentiments are dependably identified in the local discourse. One HED sponsored *Spectator* periodical, dedicated to highlighting Hamilton’s young professionals, highlights local-scene guru and founder of popular music blog *CutFromSteel.com*. In the piece, Biljana Njegovan explains Hamilton’s

¹²⁷ Sara Peesker, “Kristin Archer “hearts” Hamilton, *Hamilton Spectator*, November 14, 2014

¹²⁸ Kelly Bennet, “Rebuilding Hamilton, one architecture tweet at a time” *CBC Hamilton*, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/rebuilding-hamilton-one-architecture-tweet-at-a-time-1.3134652>

¹²⁹ Amy Kenny, “A hobby that puts food on the table”, *Hamilton Spectator*, February 24, 2014

¹³⁰ Sheryl Nadler, “Hamilton’s Beaux Mondes blog showcases the city’s cool, urban side,” *Hamilton Spectator*, February 22, 2012.

¹³¹ “Agents of Change: Beaux Mondes,” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 07, 2012.

grittiness is a key component in the emerging music scene and culture. She explains Hamilton's combination of lush natural space and gritty industrial places make the city special in comparison to other cities with "shiny shopping centres and endless suburbs"¹³². This interpretation of Hamilton is also echoed in *Urbanicity*, the local print and online monthly. In the 2014 September edition, *Urbanicity* recounts the experiences of a Toronto couple employed in the creative sector, as new residents of Hamilton. After frequenting local 'hotspots' and the James Street Art Crawl, the couple explain Hamilton was simply "a lot cooler" than they first thought¹³³.

6.7. Summary

The role of local institutions, in particular the HED and *Hamilton Spectator*, has been the production of local truths that serve to reimagine Hamilton's inner city viable creative city hub. This is accomplished by selectively reimagining urban grit as a desirable trait of urban living. Specifically, urban grit is valuable to inner city renewal, a necessary component perceived authenticity. However, unregulated grit, in the form of people and places, is considered 'weak'. As a result, the city must take measures to ensure such features of the urban landscape are cleansed. In doing so, this threatens the perception that of organic and authentic development. To negate undermining the cache of place, independent knowledge-producers, such as bloggers and social media curators, representative of the creative class, are assimilated to reproduce and validate the invaluable authenticity discourse, or as Zukin explains, the 'buzz' (Zukin 2010). Specifically, there is a concerted effort amongst local agents of change to reaffirm the

¹³² Saira Peesker, "This city is lush and gritty, a special combination," *Hamilton Spectator*, November 14, 2014.

¹³³ Scott Summerhayes, "Hamilton-bound homeowners," *Urbanicity*, September 10, 2014, <http://urbanicity.ca/2014/09/hamilton-bound-homeowners/>.

organic and authentic nature of Hamilton's revitalization. As demonstrated, the truth-claim are substantiated by independent sources of knowledge, local individuals ascribed power by their affiliation with the *Spectator* to produce and reproduce authentic truths correlated with the dominant creative city discourse. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, this narrative allows gentrifiers and the media to internalize their belief that street-reclamation following the renovate-historic-buildings formula, which produces spaces synonymous with a metropolitan chic grounded in artsy industrialism, is simply rent gap in practice: renovation-investment to increase the market value of the building and the neighborhood. As will be demonstrated, this discursive truth serves as the justification for Hamilton's urban renewal and principles of creative city revitalization practices.

Chapter 7: Reframing Gentrification

David Ley (1986) produced a Canadian assessment of inner-city gentrification. After citing an expansive body of work dedicated to understanding this urban phenomenon, Ley breaks urban gentrification into four major explanatory emphases of inner-city gentrification: Demographic Change, Housing Market Dynamics, The Value of Urban Amenity and the Economic Base (Ley 1986). At the time of his writing (1986), the general assumption among researchers was that gentrification was most detectable in the largest city centers. In the Canadian context, this was Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. However, creative city gentrification as manifest neoliberal urbanism, eschewing scale and urban hierarchy in search of capital, has now reached second and third tier cities. As a result, ‘smaller’ urban centers have dedicated considerable resources towards state-led gentrification under the guise of creative city renewal.

As discussed in the previous chapter, some of Hamilton’s urban pioneers dismissed the very notion of gentrification. Instead, ideas of authenticity, organic development and urban grit were used to frame the changes unfolding on the street. However, discussions of state-led gentrification would periodically ‘poke-holes’ in the dominant discourse. The first of these, at least within the Hamilton context,

came from local artist and founder of the ‘Festival of Friends’ (a popular and established Hamilton festival) Bill Powell. Heavily involved in the local community, Powell describes Hamilton’s incessant desire to recreate Hamilton’s image and landscape, explaining bluntly:

Thousands, if not millions, of Hamilton dollars have been spent over the years seeking the Holy Grail that would pull the city out of its inferiority complex. Consultants from around the world have analyzed, measured and called hundreds of meetings. Without fail, they came to the same conclusion: Feed the arts and they will nurture you¹³⁴

Suggesting that Hamilton had a direct role in ‘feeding the arts’, or the very idea of gentrification of the city in general, is rare in the Hamilton press. In 2010, the article bluntly titled “Is James North being gentrified?” described the failed efforts of one artist who was unable to afford a space on James Street North, he suggest the district has become “a property speculators area¹³⁵”.



Figure 6: Kuruc's 'Mixed Media' and adjoining properties

¹³⁴ Bill Powell, “Gentrification squeezes revived, arts-driven city neighbourhoods,” *Hamilton Spectator* (Hamilton Ontario) sec. News WR07.

¹³⁵ Paul Morse, “Is James North being gentrified; Ottawa Street surges as retail spot,” *Hamilton Spectator*, June 11, 2010.

Four years later another local artist was the focus of a article titled “Success of James Street North forces Hamilton artist off street¹³⁶”. The former Dofasco employee (an ironic twist) was forced to close his doors after the building was sold and rent bumped from \$1,000 to \$1,800 per month. A new coffee shop is planned for the space¹³⁷. Despite such real-life examples, they failed to have an impact on the dominant discourse. When Dave Kuruc was asked to provide his personal insights on the fate of the former Dofasco-employee-turned-artist, he reiterated the organic narrative:

Spaces are obviously at a premium. Folks want to be on James Street North because of what we’ve built here,” Kuruc said. “When people come to me now looking for a storefront, it’s not as easy to direct them to a space that’s available. When we moved here, you had your pick of spaces – it was a matter of what was the best of the worst¹³⁸

According to Kuruc, the current constitution of James North is a result of the organic and authentic evolution, an obvious casualty of what was ‘built’. As gentrification become harder to refute, the narrative changes, reframing gentrification as a positive indicator of economic renewal rather than impending fate of exclusion.

7.1. James North Gentrified

The premium spaces on James North that Kuruc refers to are described as ‘a sign of economic success,’ a trickle-effect in which “neighborhoods turn around, businesses move in, vacant buildings are filled, properties are improved, developments spring up and tax assessments climbs¹³⁹”. In the Hamilton context, this reinterpretation of gentrification began in earnest when Roger Abiss, a former business owner on James Street North, had a opinion piece published in the *Hamilton Spectator*. Titled “*In defense of gentrification*” (2010), Abiss attempts to demonstrate that both capitalism and gentrification are

¹³⁶ Emma Reilly, “Success of James Street North forces Hamilton artist off street,” *Hamilton Spectator*, December 19, 2014.

¹³⁷ Emma Reilly, “Success of James Street North forces Hamilton artist off street,” *Hamilton Spectator*, December 19, 2014.

¹³⁸ Emma Reilly, “Success of James Street North forces Hamilton artist off street,” *Hamilton Spectator*, December 19, 2014.

¹³⁹ “

fundamentally integral to alleviating poverty. According to Abbis, gentrification is

Essential and good, as well intentioned local entrepreneurs make risky investments because they want to improve the lot of the area – and yes, they hope to make a profit doing so. They create much-needed jobs to attract more business to the area. This attracts more people in the area and makes it safer to live and work in – and a virtuous cycle begins. This is the kind of economic development or “gentrification” we should be striving for. This is the kind that has dragged millions of people out of desperate poverty all over the world. The last wave of this cycle (and what I would properly call gentrification) is not good. Large national or multinational profit-maximizing corporations without particular regard for the people, community or other businesses in the area¹⁴⁰

Though optimistic, Abiss’ subjective view of gentrification fails to consider the role of institutions like the HED, or the totalizing inclinations of third-wave gentrifiers. Instead, similar to Kuruc, Hamilton’s gentrifiers believe in the organic development they participate in and thus, fail to consider the inevitability of ‘glocal’ neoliberal processes (v. Peck & Tickell 2002; Brenner & Theodore 2005; Ley 2004; Swyngedouw 1997). Furthermore, the sentiments expressed by Kuruc and Abiss falls directly in line with the marketable art-generated discourse that the City of Hamilton has invested thousands, if not millions, towards.

7.2. Hamilton’s Bourgeois Urbanism

Throughout the early 2000s, Hamilton’s on-the-ground creative city constitution amounted to the Art Gallery of Hamilton and two big residential mega-projects at the Core Lofts Condos and Stay Bridge Hotel¹⁴¹. In an effort to garner greater confidence from financial institutions and local investors, City driven initiatives such as, the Hamilton Downtown Residential Loan Program, Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program, Open for Business Program, Downtown Hamilton Heritage Grant

¹⁴⁰ Roger Abbiss, “In defense of gentrification; Sustained – and careful – economic development is imperative in alleviating poverty,” *Hamilton Spectator (Hamilton Ontario)* sec. Opinion and Editorial A11

*Less than two years later, Coffee Culture, a subsidiary of Obsidian Group Inc. moved into 89 King Street, directly across from the Gore and a two minute walk to James Street North’

¹⁴¹ Rob Faulkner, “Working to fill empty offices,” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 1, 2005, sec. Local A4.

Program and a variety of façade-improvement grants and streetscape improvements were designed to give urban pioneers and enthusiastic developers incentives to reinvest in the core¹⁴². By 2011, a variety of national media sources were referring to Hamilton as a profitable investment community.

In 2011 Toronto-based Real Estate Investment Network (REIN) named Hamilton one of Ontario's 'best places to invest', a feat celebrated and disseminated by the local booster community¹⁴³. Accreditation by REIN came shortly after the British based FDI Magazine, owned accordingly by the 'prestigious' Financial Times Group, ranked Hamilton as one of the top ten large cities in North America, 'ripe' for foreign investment¹⁴⁴. Don Campbell, president of REIN, explained the recent fervor around the city of Hamilton is, in large part, a result of the City's diligence towards creating a favorable economic climate, maintaining that "to really build Hamilton's economy, more of them [highly-skilled labor force] will have to be convinced to stay here to start new businesses, or to live here while commuting to jobs in Toronto over new rapid transit systems."¹⁴⁵ This national exposure helped soften Hamilton's image as a steel-town and over the next few years. One common practice of the HED was to advertise in national media outlets across the country. The general message: "great change is happening in the city of Hamilton"¹⁴⁶.

In 2012, after years of discursively building-up the James North Arts District, there was a blatant push to emphasize the growth in Hamilton's creative sector. The

¹⁴² Rob Faulkner, "Working to fill empty offices," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 1, 2005, sec. Local A4.

Lisa Grace Marr, "Subsidies help store owners spruce up," *Hamilton Spectator*, July 19, 2008.

¹⁴³ "Hamilton reigns as top place to invest: Company ranks Hamilton No.1 in Ontario Again," *Hamilton Spectator*, Aug 22, 2012

¹⁴⁴ "Hamilton tops another list of best places to invest," *Hamilton Spectator*, May 20, 2011.

¹⁴⁵ "Hamilton tops another list of best places to invest," *Hamilton Spectator*, May 20, 2011.

¹⁴⁶ City of Hamilton, "The top rated investment city in Canada. It's all happening here!," *Financial Post*, 2012, Toronto Ontario

entrepreneurial efforts of local knowledge based entities were held high as exemplars of Hamilton's fervent creative economy, companies such as Pipeline Studios¹⁴⁷, Telia¹⁴⁸, AS Advertising¹⁴⁹ and Brave New Code¹⁵⁰ were all featured in the *Spectator* as representations of Hamilton's post-industrial transition. On March 23, 2015, following an announcement that the City would increase arts funding by another three dollars per household, Keanin Loomis, President and CEO at the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce wrote in the *Spectator* that "Art and culture now drive Hamilton."¹⁵¹ Loomis attributes Hamilton's urban renaissance to the "fact that people are flocking to live in real livable cities again," claiming the city of Hamilton has "authenticity in abundance" and it's "livability is driven by history and culture." He concludes his op-ed piece with the indisputable claim that arts has sustained Hamilton's cultural renaissance over the last decade, and is directly responsible for the city's economic boosts.

In light of this, urban managers have emphasized the need to create spaces in the core capable of housing the anticipated influx of creative city work. Speaking to the press, Glen Norton explains this type of urban change is "important to companies like Nike or Lululemon or Apple"¹⁵². It is also a practice that willingly seeks a gentrification Abiss fears. The urban spaces deemed integral to the 'great change' advertised by the HED are Hamilton's heritage buildings. In the *Spectator*, Paul Shaker, founder of *The Centre for Community Study*, explains heritage buildings are highly attractive to economic activity, and in particular, to those involved in the creative economy. He

¹⁴⁷ "Economic Summit: Creative conversation," *Hamilton Spectator*, May 11, 2012.

¹⁴⁸ Amy Kenny, "Acquiring a Taste for Hamilton," *Hamilton Spectator* (Hamilton Spectator) June 11, 2014.

¹⁴⁹ Meredith MacLeod, "Creative technology firms betting on Hamilton," *Hamilton Spectator*, April 06, 2014.

¹⁵⁰ Meredith MacLeod, "Creative technology firms betting on Hamilton," *Hamilton Spectator*, April 06, 2014.

¹⁵¹ Keanin Loomis, "Arts and culture now drive Hamilton," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 23, 2015.

¹⁵² "Downtown is a happenin' place," *Hamilton Spectator*, January 19, 2011.

emphasis that Hamilton’s heritage assets should be key to the city’s urban renewal and where possible, heritage districts should be emphasized to attract the “highly educated, talented, entrepreneurial people of the knowledge based-economy”¹⁵³. In the inner city, the two urban spaces that embody these sentiments are the Lister Block on James Street North, and the Royal Connaught Hotel at Gore Park

7.3. Promoting Heritage

The Lister Block, a multipurpose commercial space built in classical renaissance style in 1923, stands at the corner of James North and King William. After years of neglect, graffiti and boarded up windows, the space officially closed in 1995. A decade later, in an effort to compliment the renewal efforts on James North, the City, LiUNA and the Hi-Rise Group, proposed a full renovation project of the designated heritage site.



Figure 7: Lister Block Heritage Building and proposed neighbouring Condo project

In March 2012, after a payment of \$25 million, including \$7 million in provincial cash, the Lister Block building was complete and acquired by the City of Hamilton. The commercial/office space was designated for specific businesses in the medical, dental,

¹⁵³ Paul Shaker, “Heritage assets should be part of the recovery strategy,” *Hamilton Spectator*, July 29, 2004, sec. Opinion A17.

legal, and financial or service based industries¹⁵⁴. A majority of the tenants are employed with the City of Hamilton's community, culture, heritage and facilities management divisions. The remaining spaces have been reserved for a restaurant and European-style coffee house. Upon completion of the Lister Block, the Laborers International Union of North America (LiUNA) announced the second phase of the project, a large, sixteen-story residential tower and storefront location situated directly behind the Lister¹⁵⁵.

The local media have described new residencies as 'contemporary destinations of cool' located in the 'most creative hot new hoods'. According to one *CBC Hamilton* report, emerging sites of contemporary urban development are signs of healthy housing growth, and if the City intends to embrace growth, it must also embrace intensification, including taller buildings and condo towers in new locations¹⁵⁶. Glen Norton, manager of suggests Hamilton's condo boom is not uncommon across North America, but a trend motivated by young professionals and empty-nester keen to live in an area of activity where they can walk to work and *be part of a scene* [italics mine]¹⁵⁷. As of July 2015, the street-level space of the Lister Block is now home to the restaurant franchise Wendell Clarks. According to one urban manger, "this is a great addition to the downtown. A high-end sports bar (that) really complements the James North revival"¹⁵⁸. The development of a condominium project and franchise restaurant around a heritage site is only one example of Hamilton's urban managers 'pushing' gentrification forward. Discursively, these material changes are celebrated in the press as exemplars of

¹⁵⁴ Paul Morse, "Paying to preserve the past; City works around rules to help historically significant buildings," *Hamilton Spectator*, August 16, 2010.

¹⁵⁵ John Rennison, "The new, improved Lister Block; Public get its first peek at restored building and likes what it sees," *Hamilton Spectator (Hamilton Ontario)* sec. Regional News A3

¹⁵⁶ Samantha Craggs, "Get used to taller buildings as Hamilton's housing boom continues," CBC News, November 5, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/get-used-to-taller-buildings-as-hamilton-s-housing-boom-continues-1.2823667>.

¹⁵⁷ "Condo projects to transform Hamilton skyline," *Hamilton Spectator*, August 9, 2014.

¹⁵⁸ Meredith MacLeod, "Wendel Clark's Classic Bar and Grill opens in downtown Hamilton" *Hamilton Spectator*, July 08 , 2015

Hamilton's turn-around, and validations of Hamilton's planning practices.

Perhaps one of the most celebrated heritage projects in Hamilton is the Royal Connaught Building on King Street West. Located in the east end of Gore Park, Hamilton's preeminent public space within walking distance to James North, the Royal Connaught is a tangible reflection of Hamilton's creative city ambition. Norton, expressing delight over the development, maintains "the Royal Connaught redevelopment is not only a large economic shot in the arm for the core — the restoration of the west tower alone is expected to ring up as a \$45-to-\$50-million investment — but also a powerful 'bellwether' signaling downtown Hamilton's revival¹⁵⁹". One part heritage renewal project, other part condominium development, the hotel/condominium is best described as the "perfect fusion of urban contemporary and classic style...historic luxury with suites that inspire your imagination for living"¹⁶⁰. The Royal Connaught is a representation of Hamilton's urban revival, but more importantly, its consumable heritage. Reimagining places like the Lister Block and Royal Connaught for creative city purposes are, at its core, economically driven, as the overall process of gentrification. However, by maintaining the patina and façade of authentic heritage, these sites physically embody the dominant discourse that suggests and maintains the consumer-driven 'New Cool' for the creative class.

The ostensibly organic evolution of a street is not a accidental, but rather a contrivance of proposals, studies and policies influenced and determined by the creative city discourse and its proponents. The local media in particular, plays an important role in creating and changing public perceptions of place. In the case of Hamilton, the pandering

¹⁵⁹ "Hot Hamilton condo market outperforms detached home sales; 20 percent more condos sold in September as sold in the 'same month as 2013,'" CBC News, October 16, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/Canada/Hamilton/news/hot-hamilton-condo-market-outperforms-detached-home-sales-1.2795436>.

¹⁶⁰ Royal Connaught, "Our Vision," *Royal Connaught*, accessed January 7, 2014, <http://royalconnaught.com>

of street level authenticity and urban grittiness is simply adjunct to the re-branding of Hamilton as a teeming urban center of creativity. However, a deeper analysis of the changes to the streets infrastructure and amenities indicates a process that is simultaneously and inherently first, second and third phase gentrification. At no point since local boosters and city official's embraced Hamilton's creative city discourse, was the development of James Street North or Barton Street organic nor authentic. Instead, there has been a concerted effort to reimagine Hamilton's city streets as an authentically organic process, one that maintains its cache of marketable 'coolness'. Furthermore, reorienting city spaces to accommodate a creative class culture is an inherently exclusionary urban process. Beyond the privatization of commercial spaces along the James North Arts District and those emerging on Barton Street, there is an inherent reimagining of individual performativity in the city. Complimentary to the reimagining of trendy urban space, subtle discourses regarding safety, and consumption are interlinked with the overarching creative city discourse.

7.4. Keeping the Street Authentic, Gritty and Safe

Wilson and Kelling's "Broken Windows Theory" (1982) has been hugely influential in contemporary urban planning policies and practices. First utilized in public policy during Rudy Giuliani's tenure as Mayor of New York City, both theory and practice are targeted at minor offenses such as graffiti, loitering and panhandling, to impose 'order' in the streets and promote a 'quality of life' (Smith 1996, 220). Neil Smith describes this new urban socio-cultural environment as the 'Revanchist City':

This revanchist anti-urbanism represents a reaction against the supposed "theft" of the city, a desperate defense of a challenged phalanx of privileges, cloaked in the populist language of civic morality, family values and

neighborhood security. More than anything the revanchist city expresses a race/class/gender terror felt by middle- and ruling-class whites who are suddenly stuck in place by a ravaged property market, the threat and reality of unemployment, the decimation of social services, and the emergence of minority and immigrant groups, as well as women, as powerful urban actors” (Smith 1996, 207)

These overarching multi-faceted discourses dedicated to ‘reclaiming the streets’ for the nouveau-bourgeois are supported by a series of subordinate street level discourses. In Hamilton, efforts to clean up the area and make it safe for guests, tourists and businesses is led by the four BIA’s in Hamilton’s city center. Kathy Drewitt, acting media representative for the collaborative, insisted on-the-ground efforts were crucial to creating a safe and secure public space. For example, Hamilton’s *Clean Streets Program* intends to clear public space of garbage, posters and graffiti, as well as initiate regular sidewalk washing in public spaces and nearby businesses¹⁶¹. By maintaining manicured cleanliness, similar to suburban neighborhoods, Drewitt is convinced people will grow comfortable with their urban surroundings.”¹⁶² Of course, the act of physically cleaning public space is visually appealing and linked to notions of Wilson and Kelling’s ‘Broken Window Theory’. As I have alluded to thus far, contemporary planning initiatives are predicated on creating an urban environment that represents a specific type of urban grit. As such, parallel to Hamilton’s urban authenticity truths is a discourse of urban safety. The remainder of this chapter analyzes the discursive emphasis on safety in Hamilton and how it manifests itself in the actual landscape.

7.5. Gore Park Gentrified

In a 2009 inquiry, the *Spectator* asked readers how they envisioned a new Gore Park. Most suggested there was a need to reclaim the park from the ‘seedy souls’ and

¹⁶¹ Sandy Bunyan, “BIAs improve Downtown core,” *Hamilton Spectator*, June 13, 2005, sec. Hamilton Downtown CC14.

¹⁶² Sandy Bunyan, “BIAs improve Downtown core,” *Hamilton Spectator*, June 13, 2005, sec. Hamilton Downtown CC14.

disreputable businesses in the area. These comments suggest an assumed proprietary over the space, a bourgeois right to the city. This call to displace undesirable people and behaviors is critical to the success of Hamilton's creative city project.

Beginning in 2008, the City and Downtown BIA refocused their attention on revitalizing Hamilton's central downtown public space, Gore Park¹⁶³. In the local press city initiatives were celebrated as necessary steps to retuning the park to its 'former glory'¹⁶⁴. In 2011, Kathy Drewitt suggested the Gore would be "an open air market with local businesses manning vendor stalls: booksellers to antique and collectible sellers, baked goods, flower shops, plus musicians and artists added to the mix"¹⁶⁵. Drewitt claimed such efforts were a turning point for the park, and with forty extra uniformed policemen surveilling the street, more people would be willing to come back into the park and surrounding core¹⁶⁶. In 2010, the Gore Park Plan was unveiled to the public. The *Spectator* gushed. Acknowledging the negativity associated with the park's image and the continued presence of undesirable people, the *Spectator* described a 'friendlier, greener Gore'. The piece outlined the envisioned cafes, public art, canopy of trees and "urbane, well-dressed residents strolling through the park."¹⁶⁷ The plan was described as a "solid piece of work", "a winner" and "an idea that works."¹⁶⁸ In 2012, a piece published by blogger, Seema Narula, "who writes a blog about her love for all things Hamilton," was reprinted in the *Spectator*. Narula discusses the park in the same vein as New York or

¹⁶³ Elisabeth Johns, "Gore Park revamp aims to coax folks downtown," *Hamilton Spectator*, July 7, 2008, sec. Regional News A01.

¹⁶⁴ Elisabeth Johns, "Gore Park revamp aims to coax folks downtown," *Hamilton Spectator*, July 7, 2008, sec. Regional News A01.

¹⁶⁵ Jon Wells, "Spring Tease in Gore Park; Drewitt has big plans for Summer Market program to help revitalize the core area," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 10, 2011, sec. Regional News A4.

¹⁶⁶ Jon Wells, "Spring Tease in Gore Park; Drewitt has big plans for Summer Market program to help revitalize the core area," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 10, 2011, sec. Regional News A4.

¹⁶⁷ Emma Reilly, "A friendlier, greener Gore; Pedestrian promenade, cafes highlight new vision for the park," *Hamilton Spectator*, January 19, 2010, sec. A03.

¹⁶⁸ Collen Gleeson, "We had a terrific Gore Park until 'city fathers' decided to bury it," *Hamilton Spectator*, January 20, 2010, sec. Opinion and Editorial A10.

Robert Howard, "Gore market plan a winner," *Hamilton Spectator*, March 11, 2011, sec. Opinion and Editorial A14.

Howard Elliot, "Gore Promenade an idea that works," *Hamilton Spectator*, June 18, 2011.

Berlin, asserting the Gore “can be our little piece of New York and Europe right here in Hamilton¹⁶⁹”. The same month Narula’s piece was featured in the editorial, ‘The Spectators View: Gore redesign should, and needs to, work.’¹⁷⁰ The article celebrates the plan:

The ideas and philosophy driving the redesign makes sense. Traffic will be blocked on the south leg of King Street between Hughson and James, giving merchants, the downtown business improvement association and citizens a chance to test the viability of creating a mini-pedestrian mall there. A raised crosswalk will connect the park with the south sidewalk and merchants. There will be more seating, a larger sidewalk to make room for restaurant patios, more green space and other features to stress the pedestrian-friendly nature of the redesign¹⁷¹

Despite a brief reference to the hurdles posed by existing safety and security concerns, writer Howard Elliot claims the ‘odds look good’ for a successful Gore Park transformation.

Reactions to gradual changes in the park were continually well received in the press and by its readers. Gerry Murphy, then acting chair of the Downtown BIA, explains to the press that Gore Park had become a place to both ‘gather and consume’. A visiting medical student reiterated this portrayal of the park, suggesting, “rather than just a place to congregate, it’s become a place of commerce and culture”¹⁷². Opinions, such as these, suggest any gathering or ‘congregation’ within the Park is not encouraged unless tied to some form of consumption or commerce. Reimagining the site as a place of cultural consumption shifts social attitudes regarding the park. As one park patron suggests: “A lot of people are somewhat scared of downtown. Things like this would improve that image and bring people down here, which is what it needs”.

¹⁶⁹ Seema Narula, “Gore Park an urban tradition that links us to New York, Berlin,” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 04, 2012, sec. Opinion and Columns

¹⁷⁰ Howard Elliot, “Gore redesign should, and needs to, work,” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 22, 2012, sec. Opinion and Editorial A16.

¹⁷¹ Howard Elliot, “Gore redesign should, and needs to, work,” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 22, 2012, sec. Opinion and Editorial A16.

¹⁷² Howard Elliot, “Gore redesign should, and needs to, work,” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 22, 2012, sec. Opinion and Editorial A16.

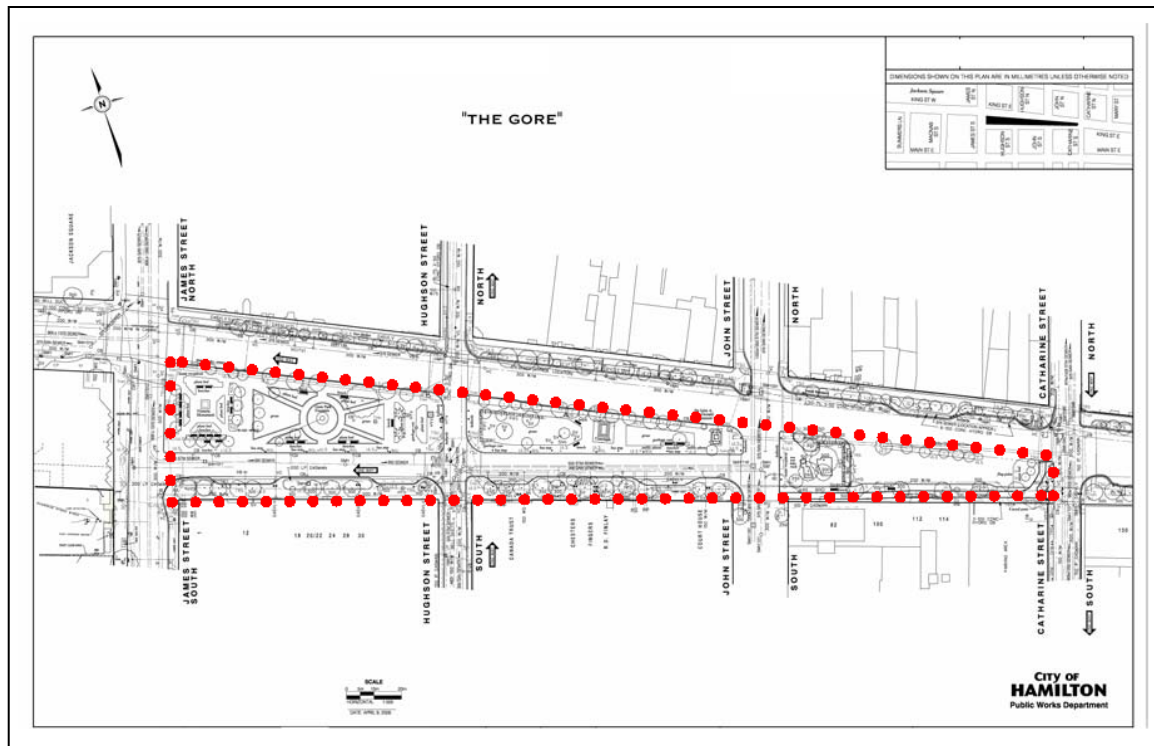


Figure 8: Map of Gore Park

Aside from the boosterish support for the consumer oriented pedestrian plan¹⁷³ described above, there was a common associated theme that persisted in the press. Specifically, as was the case on Barton and James Street North, authenticity, heritage and grit are only considered valuable when people and place are sanitized.

One *Spectator* reader suggests the City “enforce hefty fines on those who enjoy the daily pleasures of illegal drinking, drug use and ignoring our smoking-distance laws in the core,” while another claimed the park “would be pleasant if I wasn’t getting a migraine from the smoke, being asked for drugs, or smelling vomit/alcohol”. Still, another states, “any money spent to ‘revitalize’ Gore Park is wasted until you get rid of the illegal activity.”¹⁷⁴ In 2010, the *Spectator* embodied these sentiments and released the following:

¹⁷³ Howard Elliot, “Two projects, two reactions,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 20, 2010, sec. Opinion and Editorial A10.

¹⁷⁴ Meredith Broughton, “Get rid of illegal activity in Gore Park first,” *Hamilton Spectator*, October 26, 2009, sec. Opinion and Editorial A14.

We cannot ignore the perception held by many that the Gore Park area remains unpleasant at best due to some of the local population. We're not talking about panhandling, but about pot smoking, spitting and other forms of behavior that often make the atmosphere in the area uncomfortable, and uncomfortable to the very people we need more of in the core – people who work downtown, shoppers and patrons of the entertainment area. Hamilton police point out the core already has a bolstered level of foot patrols, but even so it may be necessary to have even more to ensure adequate police visibility. And the law against some of these activities certainly needs to be reinforced¹⁷⁵

Simultaneously, as the discourse pertaining to public safety was unraveling in the public discourse, the City of Hamilton, Downtown Stakeholders and Hamilton Police Services implemented specific policies and practices “that would tackle crime and safety concerns” while altering “negative perception of the core.”¹⁷⁶ Safety tactics consisted of higher park space rental, installation of CCTV in and around the park, and an increased police presence throughout the inner city (downtown ACTION teams)¹⁷⁷ [this will be discussed in the following chapter] (v.Lippert 2012; Lippert & Sleiman 2012). The official goal was to create a public space accessible to ‘all’ by offering a variety of amenities in a controlled, safe environment. As geographers have warned, pursuit of such public policies not only threatens democratic access to public space, but also stigmatizes and targets those who have no other place to be (Smith 1996; Mitchell 2003; Mitchell & Heynen 2009). By physically removing ‘undesirables’ from the landscape, cities are able to fill urban spaces with a consumers and amenities that maintain the flow of capital from the local to the global, and vice versa.

The final plan builds reimagines the location for narrating Hamilton’s history and culture. Planners, boosters and investors envision a civic gathering space, a lunch hour refuge, and family destination – a park usage reshaped similarly, though on a smaller

¹⁷⁵ Howard Elliot, “Two projects, two reactions,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 20, 2010, sec. Opinion and Editorial A10.

¹⁷⁶ Howard Elliot, “Two projects, two reactions,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 20, 2010, sec. Opinion and Editorial A10.

¹⁷⁷ Elisabeth Johns, “No Mercy for park sermons: Preachers balk at fee increases,” *Hamilton Spectator*, October 4, 2008.

scale, to Manhattan's Union Square (Zukin 2010) and Bryant Park (Zukin 1995) or Chicago's Millennium Park (Gilfoyle 2006). Described as 'Hamilton's front door', revitalization of Gore Park is critical to the success of the downtown as a whole. The 'look and feel' of the park would characterize a Victorian Carriageway. Adorned with specific landscaping features, restaurant patios, and a raised promenade, the plan is designed to emphasize 'pedestrian-friendliness'¹⁷⁸.

7.6. Summary

This chapter analyzes how authenticity and organic development truth claims are reframed in the local narrative as claims of economic prosperity. Specifically, as gentrification presents itself in the built environment, urban managers and city boosters are quick to suggest that this is the natural outcome of organic, artist-led development. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates how Hamilton has sanitized urban grit to make spaces in the core 'comfortable' for a specific public. The role of the press, as it has always been, was to highlight problems in the core and celebrate city-led solutions. In the case of Hamilton, this means the removal of undesirable people from urban spaces, individuals deemed in the public discourse as dangerous rather than vulnerable. In the following chapter I analyze how local truths of urban safety and criminalization help soften the image of Hamilton's inner city. More importantly, I establish how Hamilton's population of undesirables are subject of these truth-claims.

¹⁷⁸ "A facelift for Gore Park; City banking on pedestrians taking big steps toward revival," *Hamilton Spectator*, May 18, 2012, sec. Regional News A1.

Chapter 8: Silence of the Uncreative

This thesis has paid close attention to the terms and ideas of the creative city discourse as presented within the local Hamilton context. I have demonstrated how local truths are not only products of the creative city discourse, but also an effect of hegemonic neoliberal urbanism (Harvey 2005; Hackworth 2007; Brenner & Theodore 2005; Keill 2009; Peck & Tickell 2002; Wood 1998). I will now support this claim by conducting an analysis of silent truths not directly implied or connected to the creative city discourse. In particular, I am looking for discourses in the text that unwittingly highlight the negative repercussions of neoliberal urbanism and creative city planning (v. Rose 2012, 219; Tonkiss 2012). Based on the work of academic scholars (v. Leibovitz & Salmon 1999, 234; Logon & Molotch 1984, 484; Smith 1996, 212; Smith 1982, 139; Smith 1987, 545; Hubbard 2004) I focus my attention on silent truths of the ‘revanchist city’. The first half of this chapter analyzes the discursive truths that justify and convince of the measures taken to sanitize and maintain ‘safe’ urban grit.

In the pursuit of creative city revitalization, Hamilton’s urban managers, politicians and booster community have failed to address the socio-economic issues that have plagued Hamilton since the exodus of big industry: middle-class work. A dedication to luring potential creative workers to the city has forced a sanitizing of the streets in order to create an urban landscape devoid of undesirables, homelessness and characters of disrepute. The second section of this chapter analyzes the discourse of precarious working conditions, social exclusion and revanchist gentrification. Only recently has the media begun to loosely connect the impact of creative city planning with the socio-economic dynamic of the inner city. Even the *Spectator’s* 2010 critically acclaimed

“Code Red” series, dedicated to inner city poverty and homelessness, fails to thoroughly implicate creative city planning as a cause. What has occurred instead is a celebration of Hamilton’s creative renaissance as it unfolds alongside a fragmented discussion of issues mentioned above. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the less publicized processes of creative city revitalization and the subjective realities, or potential futures, of Hamiltonians unable to cope with Hamilton’s neoliberal urbanism.

8.1. Maintaining Safe Streets

In order to maintain a sanitized urban environment of consumable ‘urban grit’ and ‘organic development,’ safety concerns and solutions are a constant theme in the public discourse. The downtown BIA and Hamilton police in particular are crucial to fostering and maintaining the neo-suburban urban environment deemed comfortably suitable for baby boomers, and especially their echo generations (Foot 1997). The first discussions regarding urban safety measures began in 2002.

In September of that year, the *Spectator* outlined its stance on surveillance in the core. The article acknowledges the possible impositions of CCTV in public space, however due to a disproportionate amount of crime downtown, the City of Hamilton “need[ed] to implement progressive and innovative crime strategies and engage the community in the problem-solving process”. The *Spectator* suggests CCTV is an additional tool that can help Hamilton Police Services address a specific area with a unique problem. The article also suggested that in doing so, it would be possible to “increase the public’s feeling of safety and security and lead to greater use of pedestrian areas and a more attractive downtown. The use of CCTV should lead to lower insurance

and financing costs, encouraging downtown investment.”¹⁷⁹ Encouraged by *Guidelines for the Use of Video Surveillance Cameras in Public Spaces* (2007), the City implemented the two-year pilot project. In light of the decision, the *Spectator* published superintendent Mike Shea’s assurance to the public:

When the cameras are finally connected and the two-year CCTV pilot project is up and running, the citizens of Hamilton can be confident the Hamilton Police Service is compliant with every aspect of the Provincial Privacy Commissioner's guidelines. Values and ethics play a key role in any decision-making process ... I will never compromise my personal integrity or that of this Police Service¹⁸⁰

The City made CCTV permanent, expanding from the two initial cameras to sixteen, eight of which are located in the James St. North and King Street West area. By 2013, HPS launched an online crime map that would allow residents to search when and where certain crimes were happening in the city. The online service highlights criminal activity in homicide, break and enter, robbery, motor vehicle theft and theft from vehicles within a one-day delay. According to the HPS website, “crime mapping helps the public get a better understanding of the crime activity of their area so they can make more informed decisions about how to stay safe.”¹⁸¹ To further enhance the program, residents and businesses have been encouraged to register their private security cameras, providing the program with citywide access.

In order to bolster the CCTV program, the HPS also announced their intention to “build a city-wide registry of private surveillance cameras” that could be made available during investigations.¹⁸² The proposed camera registry, created by American company

¹⁷⁹ Ed Canning, “Video Cameras and the Right to Privacy,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 12, 2002.

¹⁸⁰ “The Spectator’s view: Police must honor privacy pact with citizens,” *Hamilton Spectator*, August 16, 2013.

¹⁸¹ Sunnie Huang, “Hamilton Police launch online crime map,” CBC News, November 17, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/hamilton-police-launch-online-crime-map-1.2837957>.

¹⁸² Sunnie Huang, “Hamilton Police launch online crime map,” CBC News, November 17, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/hamilton-police-launch-online-crime-map-1.2837957>.

Bair Analytics, would not guarantee police access to footage, or promise cameras would be monitored in real time. However, according to Acting Insp. Paul Evans, it would help speed up investigations by eliminating the necessary man hours needed to survey the crime area for viable surveillance cameras.¹⁸³ The popularity and implementation of CCTV has continued, despite the *Spectator*, in 2013, revealing HPS had been violating provincial guidelines designed to protect public privacy for years – and reneging Mike Shea’s earlier promise.¹⁸⁴

The emergence of CCTV parallels the popularity of creative city discourse, and can be understood as a contributor to the success of Hamilton’s creative revitalization efforts. The extent to which surveillance will exist within the city is unknown; as recently as January 2015 the City brought forward a motion to install permanent spy cameras in a majority of the City’s public spaces as a way to repel illegal dumping.¹⁸⁵ It is argued, much like in the Gore, that the presence, or knowledge of cameras in these spaces will serve as deterrents to potential offenders of any illicit activities. CCTV is widely recognized as a viable cost prevention measure (Neyland 2006). However, the actual presence of roaming police officers serves as ‘on the scene’ prevention, capable of instilling within the public a sense of safety and calm not achievable through CCTV or “policing without the police” (Atkinson 2003).

John Rieti, “Hamilton police hope to map surveillance cameras citywide; Move would cut down on time spent canvassing during Investigations, inspector says,” CBC News, November 24, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/hamilton-police-hope-to-map-surveillance-cameras-citywide-1.2844975>.

¹⁸³ John Rieti, “Hamilton police hope to map surveillance cameras citywide; Move would cut down on time spent canvassing during Investigations, inspector says,” CBC News, November 24, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/hamilton-police-hope-to-map-surveillance-cameras-citywide-1.2844975>.

¹⁸⁴ Bill Dunphy, “Police agree to surveillance privacy guidelines,” *Hamilton Spectator*, September 17, 2013, sec. Local A3

¹⁸⁵ Andrew Dreschel, “Dreschel: City considers spy cameras in parks,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 26, 2015.

8.2. Hamilton Police ACTION Team

To support CCTV, provincial funding has encouraged Hamilton Police Services and the City of Hamilton to invest in the creation and maintenance of a roaming visible police presence in the core. In 2008, the *Spectator* quoted Mark Nimigan, vice-chair of Hamilton Police Services Board, believed officers should arrest and charge people loitering and swearing in the core:

I think downtown needs to be cleaned up and allowing them to stand there and use vile, filthy language in front of the public, who are taxpaying people who should have the privilege of enjoying the downtown, is not fair...No entrepreneur wants to come downtown and open a new restaurant or a specialty shop given the atmosphere down there and I think we have an obligation to clean it up¹⁸⁶

So, influenced by the ‘Broken Windows Theory,’ (Kelling & Wilson 1982) HPS deployed a new patrol model, the Neighborhood Safety Program (NSP) in 2006. The program was dedicated to a reduction in crime, disorder and fear, while simultaneously increasing traffic safety, community mobilization and a safer working environment for officers.¹⁸⁷

By 2010, to bolster the efforts of the program, provincial funding was re-invested into the ACTION strategy, which was formerly implemented in May of 2010. Consisting of a team of officers, deployed on foot and bicycle patrol, officers would locate themselves in specific ‘hot’ areas with intent of deterring any potential crime¹⁸⁸ Upon unveiling Hamilton’s new ACTION team, police chief Glen DeCaire emphasized the necessity of such a project and explained to those in attendance the focus of the project:

Just over my shoulder in the background, is the venerable corner of our great city, at King and James [*Gore Park*]. This is downtown Hamilton, and this is the first assignment for the new ACTION TEAM. Why? Because this is where our analysis

¹⁸⁶ “Watch your mouth in city core, or taste justice,” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 21, 2008.

¹⁸⁷ Debbie Gifford, *An Overview of Violence-Prone Areas in Hamilton; Three Years Later*, Hamilton Police Services Corporate Planning Branch, May 6, 2013

¹⁸⁸ Hamilton Police Services, “Addressing Crime Trends In Our Neighborhoods (A.C.T.I.O.N),” *Hamilton Police*, accessed October 13, 2014, <http://www.hamiltonpolice.on.ca/HPS/ACTION/>

shows we need to be. Enhancing downtown health identity will serve to create a more vibrant community, and ultimately a better downtown for residents, visitors and businesses¹⁸⁹

According to CBC Hamilton, the ACTION Team has been responsible for a drop in violent crime, robbery, car thefts and other crimes since 2010, a feat achieved by conducting 10 to 15 ‘street checks’ a day, or a total of 18, 569 between 2010 and 2014¹⁹⁰. These street checks, a growing trend in many contemporary cities, involve the stopping of citizens on the street, asking for information such as where people are going, their identity, where they live and in some cases demanding identification. This can occur to anyone on the street, even when not involved in a potential investigation or witness to crime¹⁹¹.

Since becoming public information, local activist groups have increasingly begun to question this police practice. Groups such as *Black, Brown, Red Lives Matter* argue these ‘street checks’ are “unconstitutional for [they] violate Hamiltonians’ Charter of rights not to be arbitrarily detained and subjected to unreasonable search and seizure;” furthermore, the information collected and input to a databank controlled by HPS, is a direct violation of privacy rights.”¹⁹² Despite calls for clarity, Hamilton Police Chief Glenn De Caire has refrained from commenting on what constitutes a ‘street check,’ however Hamilton spokeswoman Catherine Martin has stated that these practices provide police with essential information, even if it means questioning people not under

¹⁸⁹ Hamilton Economic Development, “Hamilton Police take ACTION Downtown,” *Invest in Hamilton*, accessed October 6, 2014, http://www.bizclip.com/investinhamilton/index_no_header.php?streamname=policy-action

¹⁹⁰ Samantha Craggs, “Don’t crack down on the poor in Hamilton’s core: poverty advocates; larger community response needed, Advocate says,” CBC News, July 07, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/don-t-crack-down-on-the-poor-in-hamilton-s-core-poverty-advocates-1.2698674>.

¹⁹¹ Kelly Bennet, “Hamilton police collecting information on people not accused of crimes; anti-racism advocates worry policy may target visible minorities, as controversial ‘carding’ has in Toronto,” CBC News, February 26, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/hamilton-police-collecting-information-on-people-not-accused-of-crimes-1.2971809>.

¹⁹² Ismael Traore, “Hamilton police should explain street checks and address community concerns,” CBC News, June 23, 2015

investigation, and in some cases, asking for citizens to provide identification.¹⁹³ The Hamilton Police Union describes this practice as “proactive policing”, a measure necessary to ensure downtown business owners that their clients will feel safe.¹⁹⁴ Drewitt agrees:

You wouldn't expect to have a police officer stop you outright and ask you for ID. But if you're standing out in front of a building, panhandling or stopping people from going into that businesses and you're a bit – suspicious, I guess – I think that would be one of the reasons why. The police are trying to help the business owner from losing any customers¹⁹⁵

CCTV surveillance and police ACTION teams are considered vital to the success of Hamilton's vibrancy and creative city success. In order to maintain and expand the HPS, Glen DeCaire recently requested a record-breaking \$158 million operating budget for 2015, not including funds spent earlier in the year on a custom built \$279,180 'armored rescue vehicle'.¹⁹⁶ The proposed operating budget requested increased funding for both, the HPS intelligence unit [\$5.58 million] and downtown ACTION team [\$5.13 million].¹⁹⁷ Despite some resistance from local councilors the budget passed on January 23, 2015. The citywide initiative to provide safe passage for Hamiltonians is inherently exclusive and fails to address the socio-economic realities of most individuals living in the inner city. Instead, these measures and the discourses that support them are merely upholding a socio-economic apparatus that adjudicates public inclusion based upon an individual's ability to participate in the creative city culture, a culture predicated on consumption. As described throughout this thesis, attracting the new-knowledge worker

¹⁹³ Kelly Bennet, “Hamilton Police do 10 to 15 ‘street checks’ a day,” *CBC News*, June 22, 2015.

¹⁹⁴ Kelly Bennet, “Hamilton Police do 10 to 15 ‘street checks’ a day,” *CBC News*, June 22, 2015.

¹⁹⁵ Kelly Bennet, “Hamilton Police do 10 to 15 ‘street checks’ a day,” *CBC News*, June 22, 2015.

¹⁹⁶ Adam Carter, “Meet Hamilton police's \$279k ‘armored rescue vehicle’; Six things you should know about Hamilton's new ‘armored rescue vehicle’,” *CBC News*, May 22, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/meet-hamilton-police-s-279k-armoured-rescue-vehicle-1.2649978>.

¹⁹⁷ Bill Dunphy, “Police budget request of \$158M is largest in history of force; salaries keep going up; 3 per cent growth in expenses similar to last year's increase,” *Hamilton Spectator*, December 15, 2014.

is imperative to Hamilton's economic growth. The remainder of this chapter demonstrates the repercussions of this urban development by analyzing the social realities of individuals deemed uncreative.

8.3. Hamilton and the Un-Creative

In 2011, *CBC Hamilton* reported 30,000 Hamiltonians were living in poverty, in most instances these individuals are employed in precarious jobs situations.¹⁹⁸ Working conditions, such as randomly reduced work hours, no benefits, or insurance of future employment, these individuals survive by a weekly wage. According to a study conducted by McMaster University and the United Way, almost one in five working people within the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton area are currently employed in precarious employment, which in most cases results in employees being sub-contracted or hired through temp agencies and paid considerably less than those in permanent positions.¹⁹⁹ According to a 2013 report by the *Toronto Star*, “more than 80 percent of those in precarious employment do not receive any benefits, making them vulnerable to “unexpected life circumstances such as illness, injury, or premature retirement.”²⁰⁰ By 2015, based on new findings, such claims were reaffirmed with the bold statement that “[p]recarious work is now the new norm,” and “new form of employment”²⁰¹. In Hamilton specifically, precarious employment is close to sixty percent, a majority of which is found in the city's North end and urban core²⁰². Speaking in the press,

¹⁹⁸ Kaleigh Rogers, “Hamilton's unemployment rate hides struggles of working poor; 30,000 working Hamiltonians are still living in poverty,” *CBC News*, December 12, 2012, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/hamilton-s-unemployment-rate-hides-struggles-of-working-poor-1.1264454>.

¹⁹⁹ “Hamilton workers wages shrinking, think tank says,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 22, 2015.

²⁰⁰ Laurie Monsebraaten, “Half of GTA and Hamilton workers in ‘precarious jobs,” *Toronto Star*, February 23, 2013.

²⁰¹ Sara Mojtehedzadeh & Laurie Monsebraaten, “Precarious work is now the new norm, United Way report says,” *Toronto Star*, Thursday May 21, 2015

²⁰² “No security, no benefits: A picture of precarious work in Hamilton,” *CBC News*, June 27, 2015, www.CBC

McMaster University Professor Wayne Lewchuk explains

[p]recarious workers aren't just minimum-wage employees with irregular hours...they're also high-tech workers hired for projects, accountants who must seek one job after another, social-service sector workers employed by temp agencies and university lecturers hired on contract...It became a way of keeping down wages and companies became addicted to it."²⁰³

In the new Hamilton economy where *Art is the New Steel*, neither “super-creative” nor “steel worker” will be devoid of precarious employment. In a recent *Spectator* article, Andrew Jackson of the Ottawa-based Broadbent Institute argues that in Hamilton the

Major focus has been very much on the development of the resource economy, and manufacturing has been something of an afterthought. You say manufacturing and people tend to think of blue-collar jobs and smokestack industries. But there are a lot of high-end jobs in manufacturing as well as the knowledge economy²⁰⁴

The desire to create or project a formidable new-knowledge economy has left the City with a shallow economic personality requiring constant reassurance that arts and culture seemingly drive the City of Hamilton.²⁰⁵ However, a deeper analysis of Hamilton's ailing socio-economic issues and a concerted effort to piece together the disjointed pieces of ‘smaller discourses’ undermines the popular narrative.

In 2013, the *Spectator* reported Statistics Canada unemployment figures in Hamilton's inner city - at almost 15 percent, are twice the provincial average of 8.3 percent, and three times the level in Hamilton's suburbs.²⁰⁶ Reports nevertheless continued to surface suggesting Hamilton's local economy was experiencing a new knowledge upsurge²⁰⁷. However, as Marvin Ryder of the McMaster University business school recently explained, the low numbers in local jobless rate are due to low participation in Hamilton's labour market,

²⁰³ Susan Noakes, “Secure jobs in short supply in Canada's new tough labour market,” CBC News, April 29, 2015,

²⁰⁴ “Hamilton workers wages shrinking, think tank says,” *Hamilton Spectator*, January 22, 2015.

²⁰⁵ Keanin Loomis, “Arts and culture now drive Hamilton,” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 23, 2015, sec. Opinion and Commentary.

²⁰⁶ Steve Buist, “Code Red: Unemployment numbers ‘very, very bad,’” *Hamilton Spectator*, July 27, 2013.

²⁰⁷ “Economic Summit: Creative conversation,” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 11, 2012.

For a lot of people in Hamilton, nothing has substituted for the industrial jobs that paid well and didn't require a lot of education...Another force giving an artificial shine to the local employment picture, is Hamilton's proximity to Toronto and other places with booming employment scenes. That allows someone displaced from a job in Hamilton to commute to Oakville or Mississauga and still be counted as employed. "If we weren't close to those other communities I don't think the picture would be nearly as good here"²⁰⁸

According to a 2012 report conducted by the *Ontario Common Front*, the income gap between Ontario's rich and poor is at an all time high. A series of provincial decisions to increase wait times for subsidized housing, and to reduce funding for health care positioned Ontario behind the rest of Canada "in growing poverty, increasing inequality and flagging financial support for vital public services"²⁰⁹. Meanwhile, this new provincial commitment to austerity is unfolding on Hamilton's street.

Sara Mayo, social planner at the *Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton* suggests the city is "a microcosm of Ontario in many ways."²¹⁰ For example, *CBC News* revealed Hamilton's city center, with 111,835 people living in the riding, had 10,153 living in poverty, of those, 9.6 per cent of children are poverty-stricken, nearly double the city average"²¹¹. In an effort to explain these statistics, Tom Cooper, director of the *Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction*, said, "in Ontario, there is a one in seven children living in poverty. In Hamilton, that number is one in four ... 28,000 kids growing up in low-income households in this city and that's pretty much enough to bring Ivor Wynne Stadium to capacity"²¹². Yet such impoverishment is not well communicated in a city committed to gentrification. Instead, citywide discussions regarding downtown

²⁰⁸ Matthew Van Dongen, "\$3-billion repair backlog looms for city," *Hamilton Spectator*, January 9, 2015.

²⁰⁹ Flannery Dean, "Worsening Ontario income gap mirrored on Hamilton streets," *CBC News*, August 29, 2012, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/worsening-ontario-income-gap-mirrored-on-hamilton-streets-1.1157317>.

²¹⁰ Flannery Dean, "Worsening Ontario income gap mirrored on Hamilton streets," *CBC News*, August 29, 2012, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/worsening-ontario-income-gap-mirrored-on-hamilton-streets-1.1157317>.

²¹¹ "Report: Close to one in five Hamiltonians are living in poverty," *CBC News*, November 09, 2012, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/report-close-to-one-in-five-hamiltonians-are-living-in-poverty-1.1196223>

²¹² Flannery Dean, "Worsening Ontario income gap mirrored on Hamilton streets," *CBC News*, August 29, 2012, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/worsening-ontario-income-gap-mirrored-on-hamilton-streets-1.1157317>.

casinos, inner city transportation initiatives (LRT versus BRT), the location of sports stadia and the rebound of the local economy have predominated. However, another consistent discourse has also prevailed, in sync with the greater creative city discourse. Predicated on the idea of attracting the creative class, a distinct discourse of exclusion is sustained in the local press.

8.4. Gentrification Actualized

McMaster University Professor Richard Harris, Jim Dunn, and Sarah Wakefield recently authored *The Neighbourhood Change* report, a project started by the University of Toronto analyzing growing income inequality in neighbourhoods across Canada. In July of 2015, Harris explained to the *Spectator* that migration back to the downtown, “one that was, for decades, known for its grit”, has pushed lower income populations “out to the peripheral communities such as Stoney Creek or the Mountain” and “away from those centrally located neighbourhoods.”²¹³

According to *CBC Hamilton*, the average price for a Hamilton home is now 4.7 times the average local household income. The article surmises the rising cost of living highlights a much “darker side of the city’s much heralded housing boom and influx of Toronto buyers: That local residents trying to buy into the market might not be able to afford to”²¹⁴. In the lower city, property values have now crossed the \$200,000 threshold for the first time in the city’s history, exacerbating the gap between local incomes and housing prices, and creating a socio-economic condition described in a recent 2015

²¹³ Molly Hayes, “Inner-city gentrification is pushing out the poor,” *Hamilton Spectator*, July 02, 2015

²¹⁴ Samantha Craggs, “City spends \$50K to establish a Hamilton music office; Councillors have voted to spend money on an office in the Lister Block,” CBC News, January 23, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/city-spends-50k-to-establish-a-hamilton-music-office-1.2507356>.

affordable housing report as “seriously unaffordable”²¹⁵. Harris predicts the recent surge in property values will have a direct impact on places such as Hamilton’s North End and James Street North neighbourhoods. He suggests that both tenants, and potential buyers, will eventually be priced out of the area, and forced to migrate towards the city’s inner-city suburban neighbourhoods. According to Harris, people “will either remain renters in Hamilton or they say ‘we bought in Brantford and commute’”²¹⁶. Even for those individuals who must remain as renters, the local living situation has turned dire.

In Hamilton, rent has risen at twice the provincial guideline due to a lack of rental properties across the city. According to one *Spectator* report, “CMHC research shows the average rent for a two-bedroom suite in Hamilton area rose to \$959 a month in October from \$932 for the same month last year. That’s an increase of almost 2.9 percent when the provincial rent control guideline is 0.8 percent”²¹⁷. The demand and subsequent rise in rent is directly correlated to a citywide effort to transform apartment buildings into condominium units. McMaster University professor and gentrification expert Jim Dunn argues that many of these transformations have unfolded in harmful ways, ranging from blunt harassment, unpleasant living conditions and cash-deals to vacate the premises²¹⁸. Scenarios already unfolded in Hamilton’s inner city.

Two apartment buildings, located at John St. N and Hughson St. N, just blocks from Gore Park and James North, are slated for retrofitting into condominium

²¹⁵ John Rieti, “A million-dollar penthouse and a century cottage: 2 sides of a hot housing market; Realtors say both buyers looking for their new home and investors are competing for properties,” *CBC News*, March 09, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/a-million-dollar-penthouse-and-a-century-cottage-2-sides-of-a-hot-housing-market-1.2965490>.

Meredith MacLeod, “Bidding Wars: Just how hot can Hamilton’s housing market get? Realtors seeing bidding wars erupt in inner-city neighbourhoods that have traditionally been considered a hard sell and less than fashionable,” *Hamilton Spectator*, April 24, 2015.

²¹⁶ Meredith MacLeod, “Hamilton core leads in home price hikes,” *Hamilton Spectator* January 24, 2015.

Kelly Bennet, “Will Hamiltonians be left behind in the city’s housing boom; Growing gap between local incomes and house prices shows darker side of housing boom,” *CBC News*, January 23, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/will-hamiltonians-be-left-behind-in-the-city-s-housing-boom-1.2928423>.

²¹⁷ Steve Arnold, “Apartment vacancy plunges in Hamilton,” *Hamilton Spectator* December 17, 2014.

²¹⁸ Emma Reilly, Success of James Street North forces Hamilton artist off street,” *Hamilton Spectator* December 18, 2014.

developments. Owned by a Toronto-based company, tenants are mostly made up of low-income immigrants and those with disabilities. According to reports from *CBC Hamilton* and the *Spectator*, residents were asked to attend a meeting with building management and subsequently pressured to sign documents that would pay residents as much as \$2,000 and the last month's rent to move out²¹⁹. Landlords claimed such an arrangement would be beneficial for tenants due to an inevitable rise in rent costs and impending renovations of the building, many of which would lead to consecutive days without either water or electricity.²²⁰ As of this writing, discussions are ongoing between the City, owners and tenants. Yet this is only just one in a series of different scenarios unfolding across the city of Hamilton as described in the press.

In a recent municipal report, it was also revealed that 2,000 apartments in the city have been converted into condominiums over the last decade, a majority of which tend to cater residents at the higher end of the spectrum. The repercussions: rising home values, rents and growing subsidy lists has forced the City to put a two-year moratorium on condominium conversions in the city²²¹. However, only later was it revealed that one hundred and fifty seven units would be affected by the moratorium, while 693 other units already approved by the city will continue with the conversion process. Furthermore, if landlords can convince seventy-five percent of tenants to support the conversion, the City

²¹⁹ Carmela Fragomeni, "Downtown tenants pressured to move or pay more after renovations," *Hamilton Spectator*, February 18, 2015.

"Downtown apartment tenants 'don't want to leave' amid rent hikes, renos; Tenants of 181 John St. N. and 192 Hughson St. N. rail against poor conditions at meeting," CBC News, February 20, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/downtown-apartment-tenants-don-t-want-to-leave-amid-rent-hikes-renos-1.2964377>.

²²⁰ Carmela Fragomeni, "Downtown tenants pressured to move or pay more after renovations," *Hamilton Spectator*, February 18, 2015.

"Downtown apartment tenants 'don't want to leave' amid rent hikes, renos; Tenants of 181 John St. N. and 192 Hughson St. N. rail against poor conditions at meeting," CBC News, February 20, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/downtown-apartment-tenants-don-t-want-to-leave-amid-rent-hikes-renos-1.2964377>.

²²¹ Marck McNeil, "\$2m memorial makeover in Gore Park nearly finished," *Hamilton Spectator*, April 14, 2015.

would allow it²²². In an attempt to alleviate further displacement and gentrification, the City announced a program that would help cut back on homelessness and curb ‘gentrification’ in lower, ‘less affluent’ city neighborhoods. However, to qualify for the program, buyers must currently be renting a space for at least six months and be preapproved for a mortgage. It is also necessary that applicants have a maximum yearly gross household income of \$70,000 and the home of purchase be in one of targeted neighborhoods with a cost of \$275,000 or less.²²³.

According to one local realtor, the program sounded “like a really great way to mitigate some of the negative effects of gentrification;” however, without municipal regulations requiring a) developers to build a number of units for affordable housing, b) to pay into a fund, or c) include a mix of certain-sized units such attempted solutions will prove to be ineffective²²⁴. Despite being celebrated by local institutions, city boosters and urban managers as a reflection of Hamilton’s local resurgence, the changing cost of housing stock has a destructive impact on the people and communities that lived there.

8.5. Modern Hamilton

The rebranding of Hamilton as a creative and cultural enclave, similar to those found in most urban, and even rural places across North America, creates a public

²²² Kelly Bennet, “Moratorium won’t stop 700 apartments from turning to condos; despite low apartment vacancy rate, city’s already given ‘draft approval’ to 683 units,” CBC News, April 24, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/moratorium-won-t-stop-700-apartments-from-turning-to-condos-1.3043963>.

²²³ Teviah Moro, “City offers down payment help in strategic neighborhoods,” *Hamilton Spectator*, March 31, 2015.
Kelly Bennet, “Buying into Hamilton’s housing boom with a little help from city hall; City loans aim to help stem displacement of residents from rapidly appreciating neighborhoods,” CBC News, April 09, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/buying-into-hamilton-s-housing-boom-with-a-little-help-from-city-hall-1.3025104>.

²²⁴ Kelly Bennet, “Will Hamiltonians be left behind in the city’s housing boom; Growing gap between local incomes and house prices shows darker side of housing boom,” CBC News, January 23, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/will-hamiltonians-be-left-behind-in-the-city-s-housing-boom-1.2928423>.

Kelly Bennet, “Buying into Hamilton’s housing boom with a little help from city hall; City loans aim to help stem displacement of residents from rapidly appreciating neighborhoods,” CBC News, April 09, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/buying-into-hamilton-s-housing-boom-with-a-little-help-from-city-hall-1.3025104>.

Teviah Moro, “How tall is too tall? City wants to size up public input,” *Hamilton Spectator*, May 08, 2015.

perception of an ascendant city through a local renaissance that should be celebrated for its ability to ‘trickle-down’ into the seemingly uncared for streets of the city’s downtown core. Creative city discourses do not support spatial dissent, especially from the struggling city that exists parallel to the creative one. That parallel city, a result of failed policies and decisions, from the global to the local, represents three levels of government negligence towards a significant segment of Hamilton’s population. When topics such as gentrification and urban development bump against homelessness or unemployment, the latter is framed as a cause of Hamilton’s spatial degeneration, and not a symptom of a larger political economy devoted to supply-side policies. Such disconnect, especially in the local media, allows Hamilton’s urban managers, city leaders and business community to make the same mistakes liberals made one hundred years ago, and blame the environment for the problems created by unemployment.

Much of what has happened in Hamilton has occurred under the premise that people and businesses from the Greater Toronto Area would flock to the inner city after experiencing the spectacle of the Super Crawl, the reasonable property values, and bohemian culture emerging throughout the inner city. Through municipal planning policies and legislation, the City of Hamilton has embarked upon a rebranding campaign that market Hamilton as the next cultural consumption mecca in the Greater Toronto Area. James Street North specifically has been designated as an organic cultural mecca for artists and young creative workers alike seeking an urban lifestyle without the economic determination synonymous with Toronto. This has resulted in the blatant and very real gentrification of the streets and gradual displacement of local people who find themselves marginalized because of poverty, unemployment or precarious employment.

There has also been a sinister reimagining of the inner city's prominent public spaces, in particular Gore Park. In an effort to entice and ensure the potential waves of incoming residents that Hamilton's inner city is indeed safe and family-friendly, the park has undergone a renovation that encourages affluent consumption while simultaneously discouraging undesirable behaviour and people through police enforced surveillance, street presence and alterations to the actual ground.

Instead, by choosing to invest financial, political and legal resources in the creation of an affluent urban landscape, monitored by a potentially formidable police presence, Hamilton risks possibly ignoring and excluding a large contingent of its population. The systemic socio-economic disparities, glaringly evident in Hamilton, and cities around the world, are emerging as the greatest threat to twenty-first century society. In the Canadian context, the changing landscape and exclusionary nature of contemporary city planning are causes for concern.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

In August of 2015, local boosters, urban managers, Hamilton-based blogs and social media curators relished the release of the *Huffington Post* article titled: “How Hamilton’s Collective Pursuits Are Creating Canada’s Brooklyn”²²⁵. This was not the first time Hamilton has been compared to Brooklyn²²⁶, or any other creative city for that matter²²⁷. Labelled by the author as “Hamilton 2.0”, the article suggests the steel town image has been erased in favour of a “a city that is organically and strategically turning into what some are saying could be Canada’s answer to the movement that’s inspired a modern Brooklyn”²²⁸. Rhetoric throughout the piece is akin to the buzzwords identified and analyzed throughout this thesis: authentic, organic growth, thriving culture, local scenes, vibrant communities, culture and architecture are prominent throughout the piece. The author of the piece, seemingly in tune with the local economic discourse, even affirms that Hamilton’s emerging knowledge economy is attributed to the “re-invention of large heritage buildings into active hubs of commerce and culture”²²⁹. All prominent ‘creative city’ language is identified throughout the piece, however one sentence in particular, speaks louder than most: Hamilton is “creating a place where people want to come live and visit”²³⁰.

There have been various themes and truths discussed throughout this thesis, ideas of urban degradation, renewal, authenticity and grit are prominent throughout the analysis. All of which are used inform and validate the material changes happening on the ground. However, as I have shown, these ‘truths’ alone do not insure successful

²²⁵ <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/marcello-cabezas/hamilton-canadas-brooklyn>

²²⁶ Elle Canada

²²⁷ Pittsburgh Solution

²²⁸ <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/marcello-cabezas/hamilton-canadas-brooklyn>

²²⁹ <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/marcello-cabezas/hamilton-canadas-brooklyn>

²³⁰ <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/marcello-cabezas/hamilton-canadas-brooklyn>

creative city renewal. Rather, underlying truths, justifying the criminalization and sanitization of undesirable urban grit are produced to create the perception of a city where people can live, work and play. In doing so, discourses of marginalization, exclusion and inequity are also produced, yet exist disconnected from the dominant and overarching creative city discourse. This returns me to the preliminary research questions introduced in the first chapter:

- How have neoliberal discourses impacted Hamilton's built environment?
and
- What are the local truths that produce and reproduce neoliberal hegemony within Hamilton?

As demonstrated, in order to answer these questions I conducted a discourse analysis of the local press and producers of local knowledge closely affiliated to the *Spectator*. However, before delving into the primary data source, chapter three provides a historically discursive account of Hamilton's attempted transformation from manufacturing to knowledge-based economic city centre. Beginning as early as the nineteen sixties, I illustrate the multi-scalar neoliberal processes that informed Canadian politics, economics, planning policies and material environment for most of the twentieth century. In particular, I pay close attention to the globalization of Hamilton's steel manufacturing (Weaver 1982, Freeman 2001), establishment of a Canadian neoliberal bloc (Carroll & Shaw 2001), destabilizing of the Keynesian welfare state (Weber & Fincher 1987) and dissemination of neoliberal discourses (Peck & Tickell 2002) into national (Tupper & Doern 1988; Darche & Gertler 1991) and provincial policies (Keil

2002; Graham & Phillips 1998). Specifically Ontario's 'Places to Grow' Act (2005), which serves as the benchmark for creative city renewal in the Greater Horseshoe Area.

I illustrate how these political and economic decisions, nationally and provincially, have impacted Hamilton as a city. I pay particular attention to the series false-start urban renewal campaigns like the "Civic Square Project" [1970s], "Central Area Plan"[1980s] and "Downtown Action Plan" [1990s]. All of which share a commonality with Hamilton's latest urban renewal effort, except now, city boosters, urban managers and local elite have the full support of the Provincial government and considerable discursive momentum. Understanding and analyzing this momentum leads to the second research question listed above. However, during my research and writing, I have slightly changed the question to ask: What are the local truths that produce and reproduce neoliberal hegemony, *and how do they validate creative city initiatives and neoliberal urbanism?*

In chapters four & five I begin my analysis of Hamilton's local discourses, as they exist in the local press and affiliated knowledge productions. Initially, I searched for specific terms, keywords and themes. However, after thorough reading of primary material, I found specific truth-claims that persisted over time and across material (v. Rose 2012; Tonkiss 2012). Specifically, I became interested in local truths that describe downtown Hamilton as both: a place of danger and imminent urban renewal. During the sixties, seventies and eighties this intermittent relationship was predicated upon the decisions and initiatives of Hamilton council. In anticipation of forthcoming planning policies and decisions, the local media would construct and reconstruct urban problems (v. Edleman 1988). Since the 60s, winos, drifters and the unemployed, along with empty

buildings, stores and streets, defined as urban grit, constituted Hamilton's urban problem. This truth-claim persisted well into the 90s and 2000s. However, in light of the work done by Richard Florida (2002) and Ontario's "Places to Grow Act" (2005), places like Hamilton revived knowledge-economy city planning initiatives. Integral to this transformation was the redefining the characteristic of urban grit from dangerous to desirable. However, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, there is one caveat in the reframing of Hamilton's urban grit. The people and places of disrepute need to be removed from place. Only their socio-physical impressions on space, defined as authentic, are allowed to persist. Chapter five focuses on the transformation of these local truths.

Firstly, I emphasize the importance of local institutions, specifically the Hamilton Economic Development Office, in producing Hamilton's official creative city narrative. The role of the HED in creating localized reproducers of knowledge, both within the media (HamiltonBusiness.Com) and outside it (Hamilton Hive, YEP, Hamilton Economic Summit etc.) is imperative to the localized truth claims being made. The *Spectator* in particular has played a pivotal role in reproducing a narrative that closely reflects the ideals and principles of Richard Florida's creative city renewal initiatives, specifically, the authenticity and organic development of Hamilton's urban renaissance.

In order to validate claims of authenticity, the *Spectator* requested contributions from local gentrifiers like Dave Kuruc of Mixed Media and Jeremy Frieburger of Cobalt Connects. In both cases, the individuals and their enterprise are predicated on the development of art and artistic communities around Hamilton. The press characterizes both as legitimate adjudicators of Hamilton's creative city renaissance, even if both are

heavily invested in the success of the street. However, to convince the public of Hamilton's post-industrial transformation, the savvy millennials of Hamilton's creative class are incorporated into local discursive production. Unofficial producers like *Urbanicity*, *Beaux Mondes*, *@Rebuild Hamilton* and *@IHeartHamilton*, all of which have been featured and publicized in the dominant media, download key ideas and terms that reproduce the creative city solution as a legitimate and successful process of urban renewal. Parallel to the production and reproduction of Hamilton's creative city discourses is actual gentrification processes on the ground. As this urban process becomes undisputable, there is yet another shift in the definition of urban grit. Instead of authenticity, Hamilton's creative city revival, specifically James Street North, is celebrated as an exemplar of economic prosperity. 'Gentrification', as it exists in Hamilton, is the kind of economic development that attracts business to an area and makes it safe to live and work in. In chapter six, I outline how these terms are redefined, but also how the gentrification agenda is pushed forward. By celebrating the economic success of Hamilton arts and culture, heritage renewal sites, condominium developments and the possibility of luring multi-national companies like Nike or Apple to the core, there is a public perception that Hamilton's economy has recovered from years of industrial stagnation.

However, as already demonstrated in chapter seven, these truth-claims fail to give attention to the vulnerable populations and spaces of Hamilton's contemporary urban initiatives. As Hamilton's creative city revival unfolds, Hamilton's undesirable urban grit is redefined, excluded and criminalized. The glaring socio-economic realities, causalities of neoliberal principles, impacted by localized creative city renewal practices can have

serious implications on the general population. Precarious work situations, the rising cost of living and eradication of a social safety net can potentially leave thousands of Hamiltonians in seeking refuge in Hamilton's mean streets. The discursive neoliberal restructuring of the last twenty-five years is now reaching the end of its material urban reality.

9.1. Closing Thoughts

According to Richard Harris, the renaissance on Barton is inevitable as "Hamilton and the GTA will continue to expand, and so places like Barton Street will eventually rise again. The question is how soon."²³¹ The intention of this thesis was not to pose the "how soon" question Professor Harris asks, but to understand 'why?' The rebranding of Hamilton as a creative and cultural enclave, similar to those found in most urban, and even rural places across North America, creates a public perception of an ascending city through a local renaissance that should be celebrated for its ability to 'trickle-down' into the seemingly uncared for streets of the city's downtown core. Creative city discourses does not support spatial dissent, especially from the struggling city that exists parallel to the creative one. That parallel city, a result of failed policies and decisions, from the global to the local, represents three levels of government negligence towards a significant segment of Hamilton's population. When topics such as gentrification and urban development bump against homelessness or unemployment, the latter is framed as a cause of Hamilton's spatial degeneration, and not a symptom of a larger political economy devoted to supply-side policies. Such disconnect, especially in the local media, allows Hamilton's urban managers, city leaders and business community

²³¹ Jon Wells, "Barton Street: Bound for glory or...?" *Hamilton Spectator*, March 25, 2013.

to make the same mistakes liberals made one hundred years ago, and blame the environment for the problems created by unemployment.

Much of what has happened in Hamilton has occurred under the premise that people and businesses from the Greater Toronto Area would flock to the inner city after experiencing the spectacle of the Super Crawl, the reasonable property values, and bohemian culture emerging throughout the inner city. Through municipal planning policies and legislations, the City of Hamilton has embarked upon a rebranding campaign that market Hamilton as the next cultural consumption mecca in the Greater Toronto Area. James Street North specifically has been designated as an organic cultural mecca for artists and young creative workers alike seeking an urban lifestyle without the economic determination synonymous with Toronto. This has resulted in the blatant and very real gentrification of the streets and gradual displacement of the local popularity that find themselves marginalized because of poverty, unemployment or precarious employment. In conjunction with the marketing efforts of the streets, there has also been a sinister reimagining of the inner city's prominent public spaces, in particular Gore Park. In an effort to entice and ensure the potential waves of incoming residents that Hamilton's inner city is indeed safe and family-friendly, the park has undergone a renovation that encourages affluent consumption while simultaneously discouraging undesirable behaviour and people through police enforced surveillance, street presence and alterations to the actual ground.

Instead, by choosing to invest financial, political and judicial resources to creating an affluent urban landscape, monitored by a potentially formidable police presence, Hamilton risks possibly ignoring and excluding a large contingent of its population. The

systemic socio-economic disparities, glaringly evident in Hamilton, and cities around the world, are emerging as the greatest threat to twenty-first century society. In the Canadian context, the changing landscape and exclusionary nature of contemporary city planning provides a cause for concern.

Walking past Gore Park on my way to Mulberry Café, the neighbourhood, except for a few tired youth sitting cross-legged at the foot of Jackson Square, was quiet. Their faces were expressionless and devoid of emotion, but a large abscess on one of the males right arm struck me with a lasting impression. As a middle-class white suburban youth, the harsh realities of twentieth century urbanity had only been experienced through the safe and sanitary prevue of contemporary media outlets and university sanctioned courses. Almost instinctively, I forgot all that I had learned and immediately experienced feelings of disgust, fear and confusion. I remember hurrying to the semi-sanitized confines of the trendy coffeehouse, where I slowly became ashamed of my behaviour and reaction. Throughout the entire process of this thesis project, and on my multiple trips to the field, this event resided with me and helped formulate my thoughts and intentions. If Hamilton's creative city urban renewal process goes unregulated, much like notions of capital and neoliberalism, political leaders, urban managers and city boosters will succeed in creating yet another urban habitat that contradicts the ideals of democracy and the rights of it's citizens. Instead of masking Hamilton's socio-economic ailments with marketing strategies, planning policies and municipal bi-laws, there needs to be a truthful discussion regarding urban poverty, socio-economic displacement and the criminalization of the poor. In the twenty-first century, public discussion should question "what to do with the urban poor?" but instead, "why are they here in the first place?"

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